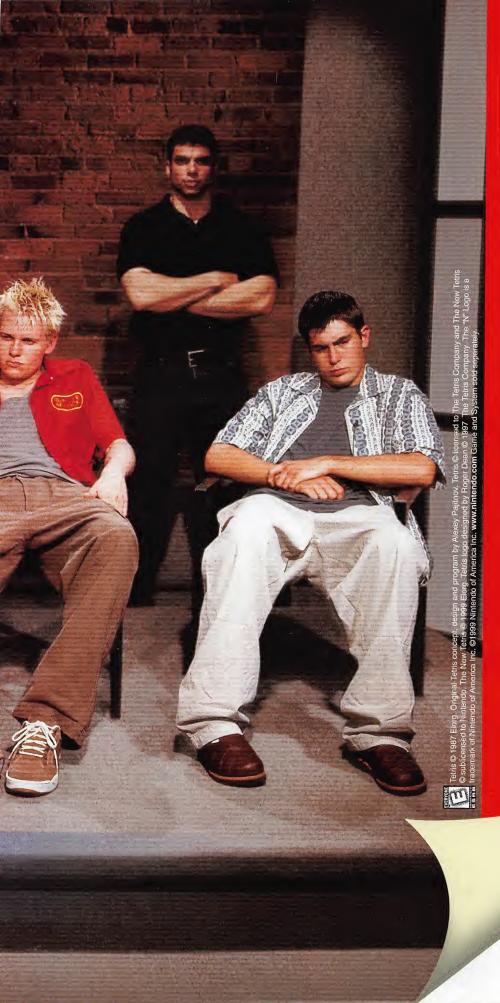


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# ISSN# 1092-7212

As Dreamcast inches ever closer to a 9-9-99 release, anticipation and hype continue to snowball. As of this writing, Sega is already looking at over 100,000 reservations at the nation's retailers, and KayBee Toys, who didn't even bother carrying Saturn, has just signed on to peddle DC wares (if that's not a vote of confidence...). If retailer sentiment is in any way a gauge of how DC is going to fare in the US, then it's a pretty safe bet that it's going to be a resounding success... at least for the first six months of its life (something Sega desperately needs both here and abroad). And as new games start to roll in on a weekly basis from this date out, it's kinda hard to remember that there are already two very wellestablished console giants duking it out, in the calm before the coming storm.

Shots have already been fired in the form of a (unofficial) price reduction on both PlayStation and N64 by (again) KayBee Toys — expect other retailers to follow suit shortly. This is good news indeed for gamers everywhere as now nobody has an excuse not to own both (well, maybe starving college students... lord knows I've been there), therefore giving people everywhere a crack at owning the best games on both platforms.

And while some people will put forth the notion that a DC @ \$200 can't compete with the others at their new, lower prices (or even their current price), never underestimate the power of little Jimmy during the holiday shopping season, tethered to mommy, besieging her with a barrage of "Can I have it?! Huh, can I?! Please!!!!" Her only recourse being to purchase the console and a slew of games to sate the boy's mad dance of destruction, err... or something like that.

Meanwhile, what do fans of the old hardware have to look forward to? Well, on PlayStation it's all about RPGs! This year's domestic boon started with Jade Cocoon, Shadow Madness, Legend of Legaia, Lunar: SSSC, and Star Ocean 2, and will soon be joined by Konami's Suikoden II, Square's Final Fantasy VIII and Final Fantasy Anthology (minus FFIV, argh!), Atlus'

Thousand Arms, and SCEA's Grandia, <whew>! That's more RPGs in one year than any console in the past has ever seen in the same span of time (by at least a 2:1 ratio). The days of RPG gamers not getting what they want are long, long gone with RPGs finally reaching 'cool' status with gamers, as platformers did back in the 16-bit days (all right, so it hasn't quite reached those manic levels... yet).

N64 fans, while having nearly nothing to look forward to in the RPG realm, do have the stunning Jet Force Gemini (with handy 'upgraded' characters), Donkey Kong 64 and of course the nigh-unbelievable Perfect Dark to add to the single best, RPG-less, library in all of gamedom. If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times: If I had to buy one domestic console right now, it'd be from the gamesmiths at Nintendo (hey, we're not all over-the-top RPGhounds, right?).

As a brief aside from purely magazine-type things, I'm gonna throw in a quick plug for the recently announced GameFan Network, which can be found on the Internet @ www.gamefan-network.com. It features everything you've come to expect from GameFan Online (www.gamefan.com) with a whole slew of new sites geared towards offering you, the enthusiast gamer, the only stop you need to sate your gaming hunger on a daily basis. We're adding sites all the time, and this is one community you need to be a part of.

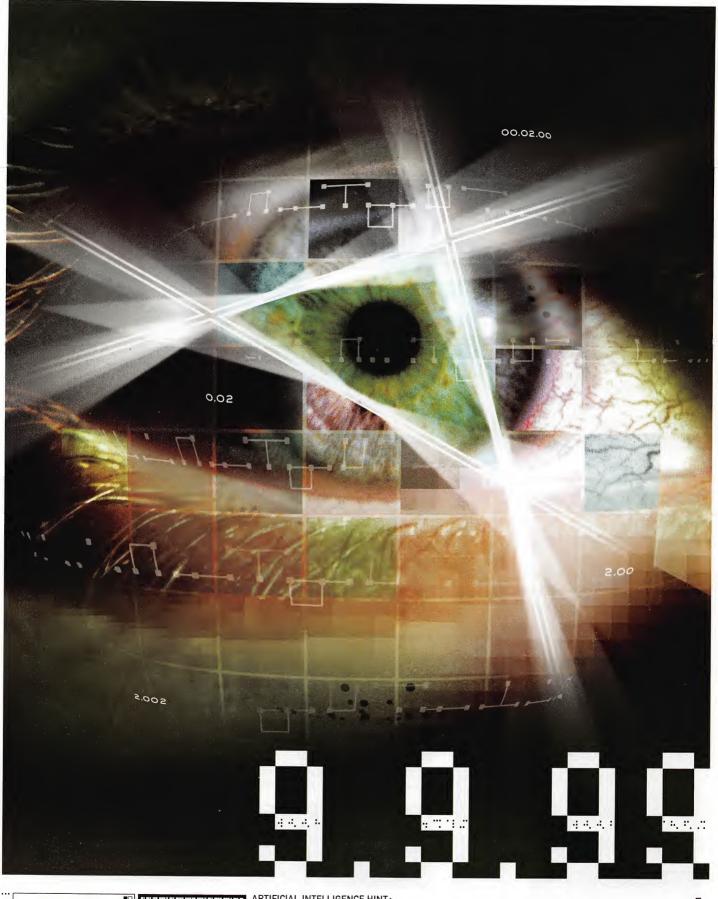
That about wraps this month's 'ECM Diatribe.' Tune in next month, when we'll explore the ramifications of the Internet and its unfathomable ability to turn otherwise intelligent people into raving, babbling idiots (ah, the anonymity and lack of accountability). Till then...

> ditorial Director Eric Mylonas

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it's thinking

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# SO REALISTIC, YOU'LL BE PICKING YOUR TEETH OUT OF THE DIRT.



# Championship Alotocross Featuring Ricky Carmichael







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# TOP TEN MOST WANTED

# August 1999

# SUPER SMASH BROS.

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO



# READER'S TOP TEN

- 1) SUPER SMASH BROS. N64
- 2) SW: EPISODE 1 RACER N64
- 3) STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 PS
- 4) SYPHON FILTER PS
- 5) RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 PS
- 6) SILENT HILL PS
- 7) ZELDA: OOT N64
- 8) METAL GEAR SOLID PS
- 9) GOLDENEYE N64
- 10) LUNAR: SILVER STAR STORY PS

# READER'S MOST WANTED

- 1) SONIC ADVENTURE DC
- 2) SOUL CALIBUR DC
- 3) RESIDENT EVIL 3 PS
- 4) RE: CODE VERONICA DC
- 5) SHEN MUE DC
- 7) DINO CRISIS PS
- 8) PERFECT DARK N64

6) FINAL FANTASY VIII - PS

- 9) METROID N2000
- 10) Donkey Kong 64 N64



# **GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN**

\*IMPORT TITLE



- 1) Mario Golf\* N64
- 2) TRUXTON 2 ARCADE
- 3) RADIANT SILVERGUN\* SS
- 4) GRANDIA PS
- 5) M.U.S.H.A. GENESIS
- 6) CRUSH ROLLER NGPOCKET
- DEVIL DICE PS
- BLUE STINGER\* DC
- 9) AXELAY SNES
- 10) DEVIL'S CRUSH TG-16



- 1) VIRTUAL ON 2 ARCADE
- 2) SAMSHO II NGPOCKET
- 3) SONIC ADVENTURE\* DC
- 4) SW: EPISODE 1 RACER N64 5) DINO CRISIS - PS
- 6) METAL SLUG NGPOCKET
- 7) DYNAMITE DEKA 2\* DC
- 8) STAR OCEAN 2ND STORY PS
- 9) SF2: HYPER TURBO ARCADE
- 10) SF3: 3RD STRIKE ARCADE



- 1) CRAZY TAXI ARCADE
- PARASITE EVE PS
- UMJAMMER LAMMY\* PS
- 4) RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 PS
- 6) THOUSAND ARMS PS
- 7) SF ALPHA 3 PS
- 8) Mr. BONES SATURN
- 9) POP'N MUSIC\* DC
- KING OF FIGHTERS '98 NG 10) RADIANT SILVERGUN\* SS



- 1) STREETS OF RAGE 2 GENESIS
- 2) PHANTASY STAR 2 GENESIS
- 3) FINAL FANTASY VIII PS
- 4) THOUSAND ARMS PS
- 5) RAYMAN 2 N64
- 6) NBA SHOWTIME ARCADE 7) STAR OCEAN 2ND STORY - PS
- 8) COMIX ZONE GENESIS
- 9) OUAKE III TEST PC
- 10) BLUE MAX C64



- 1) SILENT SCOPE ARCADE
- 2) GUITAR FREAKS ARCADE
- 3) BEATMANIA 2 ARCADE
- 4) TEKKEN TAG TOURN. ARCADE 5) GIGA WING - ARCADE
- 6) ACE COMBAT 3 PS 7) BUST-A-MOVE 2 - PS
  - 8) OMEGA BOOST PS
  - 9) KONAMI ARCADE CLASSICS PS
  - 10) ZOMBIE REVENGE ARCADE



- 1) MIGHT & MAGIC VII PC
- 2) QUAKE II PC
- 3) CIV: TEST OF TIME PC
- 4) NBA SHOWTIME ARCADE
- 5) NCAA FOOTBALL 2000 PS
- 6) SF3: 3RD STRIKE ARCADE

THIS MONTH'S GUEST: TRACY JOHNSON PRODUCER, SEGA SPORTS

- 7) SEGA NFL 2000 DC
- 8) SEGA NBA 2000 DC
- 9) READY 2 RUMBLE DC
- 10) SLED STORM PS

# THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR **CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!**

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO ENTER THE DRAWING IS WRITE DOWN A LIST OF YOUR TOP 10 FAVORITE GAMES AND THE 10 GAMES YOU WANT THE MOST THAT AREN'T OUT VET. ON A PIECE OF PAPER OR A POSTCARD THEN SEND THEM TO: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 6301 DESOTO AVE., SUITE E, WOODLAND HILLS, CA 91367

YOUR CHOICE OF ONE OF THE PICKS OF THE MONTH IN VIEWPOINT.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO LAST MONTH'S WINNERS:

FIRST PRIZE: ALEX BROOKS

THIRD PRIZE: SECOND PRIZE: RAHUL SHARMA SAN ANTONIO, TX

DRAWING IS LIMITED TO ONE (1) ENTRY PER PERSON PER MONTH. DRAWINGS WILL BE HELD ON THE 21ST OF EACH MONTH. THE THREE (3) WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED BY MAIL AND LISTED ON THIS PAGE. FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF RULES AND REGULATIONS WRITE: GAMEFAN TOP TEN WITH SELF ADDRESSED & STAMPED ENVELOPE.

# DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This was difficult to trim down to ten but here goes:

- 1. Baseball Stars NES
- 2. Robotron Arcade
- 3. Tecmo Football Series
- 4. NBA Live '97 Genesis
- 5. NHL '94 Genesis
- 6. World Series Saturn
- 7. Shining Force Genesis
- 8. NBA Jam Arcade
- 9. Dark Wizard Sega CD 10. Defender - Arcade

# BASEBALL STARS



PUBLISHER: SNK

"All these games spent many hours in my home system or took many of my quarters and study time while in college. Sports has normally been my favorite genre and Baseball Stars was the game to have early on. Games have come a long way since then, but I still occasionally play the old ones. All the above titles will slip down the chart once Sega Sports' NBA is released. It will be the new standard by which all other hoops games will be judged. Stay tuned."



# ecm@gamefan.com



# ECN

With a temperament only a rabid wolverine could love, ECM isn't the easiest chap to work for. While most GF eds wouldn't trade their jobs for anything, they'd endure colonostomies, boric acid enemas, and even algebra for a brief respite from his 'friendship.'

# cerherus@gamefan.com

Under Construction

# CERBERUS

Newly-hired exec ed Cerberus' (formerly of T&T fame) bizarre fascination with dancing games, hair coloring (blue, mainly), and Erasure has led the other eds to question what exactly goes on after hours with T&T's predominantly male staff... <shudder>.

# elnino@gamefan.com



# **EL NINO**

Es información pública que El Niño gasta mucho de su tiempo durante horas de trabajo jugando Everquest y Quake II. Ahora este chico enorme aspira ser un Dark Elf muy potente en Everquest... Lo hemos perdido. Too bad he doesn't understand this either.

# eggo@gamefan.com



# EGGO

When he's not breaking up marriages, beating people down in *Street Fighter*, and making ECM feel tall, Eggo vainly tries to convince the rest of GameFan that "Racing Lagoon isn't that bad..." and "No, really, I am Asian...I just don't eat that way."

# dangohead@gamefan.com DANGOHEAD



GameFan's resident codes and strategy editor recently met the news of a sudden shift in responsibilities that now includes GameFan Online with stoic determination and typical Dango-esque flair: "Why God! Why me...what did I ever do to you?! Argh!!!"

# THE 6th MAN



Who is the mysterious 6th man? Only the Shadow knows (oh, and ECM). Figuring that while he was 'borrowing' the ed round-up from Cerberus' former home, he also thought that it would be cool to snag some 'sushi' from a certain other nameless mag.

# Check out the all-new

# Tride artr

# reubus@gamefan.com



# REUBUS

When not regaling the GF staff with tales of his 'Navy days' or North Dakota, Reubus can be found not saving money at the local Tower Records.

# waka@gamefan.com



# WAKA

Waka is currently experiencing marital problems because of his new-found love... EverQuest. "Server is not responding." And now, neither is his wife...

# tao@yamefan.com

Under Construction

# TAO

Tao has set a GF record for creating the most illegible layouts ever to appear in a single issue of GameFan...his excuse, "that @#\$% squid made me do it!"

# PRODUCTIVITY KILLER OF THE MONTH



Height: 6.43 in Weight: 3.2 oz Blood Type: O Special Abilities: Tickler or the almighty Pimp-Slap™.

You'd think that a life of video games would be easy, but it's not. With so many toys and games under one roof, it's easy to get distracted from your 'work.' Often one item will either draw a crowd or cause such a stir that all office productivity comes to a screeching halt. This month, that item is The Squid. Nobody knows where it came from, but Waka is the one usually wielding it. In addition to being a glowing phallic symbol, The Squid has been known to Pimp-Slap™ unsuspecting editors on their mouse hand if they're working too hard.

Squid-cam! Watch the Squid as it a d r o i t l y stalks its prey—an unsuspecting *GF*-ed whom will soon be the recipient of an especially vicious Pimp-Slap™.



# This month in GameFan's BOX-O-FUN! GF WORLD TOUR

Ocassionally, *GF* editors are not content to just play video games. Seeking more in life, these malcontents fled the cave deep in Woodland Hills in search of greener pastures. But we know they have fans who want to know what they're up to. Lucky for us, Big Bubba, Super Teeter, and the Video Cowboy sent us this postcard from Madagascar, Pop. 13.4 million plus three, lost amongst 226,658 square miles of rice and grassland.



# CITICICEN OF TITHE MONTH

"Chicken" — The GameFan term for swag, loot, or all the free stuff we get for being video game editors. In the interest of filling space, we've decided to take up a whole paragraph every month showing off the best chicken we have which you don't. This month's Super Chicken is the mini Marvel vs. Capcom arcade cabinet that ECM won at a recent Capcom E3 tournament. Notice that the height of the cabinet is perfectly suited for its <ahem> mini owner.





# Actual Size!!

# Sausage of Trite Montrit

Our sausage (*GF* term for the super-skilled, hard-core, all-knowing, psycho gamer... a.k.a. loser **or** Dangohead!) of the month is Amir Amirsaleh. This picture comes from the *Street Fighter II* ECC. It's funny, because many of us have met him before. A permanent resident of the UCLA arcade from the age of 10, Amir was nicknamed "Gogo" after the character in *Final Fantasy III* because his super-skillz allowed him to mimic any combo you performed on him after seeing it just once. If you wish to be *GF's* "Sausage of the Month," send in your picture and sausage sob story care of the Postmeister, and you could be immortalized in the hallowed pages of *GameFan* — at your expense!













Cerberus under construction

Graphics Control P - Play Mechanics Music Originality

under

construction

under

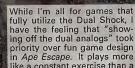
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Ape Escape PlayStation SCEA Platform

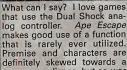
If there was ever a game cre ated to cater to me, in concept, it would be Ape Escape. Sure sounded good, didn't it? Mandatory Dual Shock con-trol, years in development,

Sony's 'next big thing'... heck, it's even original — wonder of wonders on the PlayStation! While I could call this game ill-conceived, uninspired, and downright boring, I'll simply call it *Blasto 2: The Next Generation*, and leave it at that.



like a constant exercise than a Maybe when Ape Escape 2 comes out, they'll let training take a backseat to some decent play mechanics. I'm not a fan of scavenger hunt 3D games, even if there are monkeys in it. Still, everything

else about this game is cool..



definitely skewed towards a younger audience, but so was Crash — and it was still a very fun game. If you don't like cutesy-style platform games then stay away. Overall, Ape Escape is a solid platform package that continues the gaming experience that Crash started.



lade Cocoon **PlayStation** Crave **Role Playing** 

wrangling monkeys ain't my cup o' java, wrangling monsters certainly is! While we'll all have to wait a little longer for Tecmo and Monster

Rancher 2, you could fill that void with Jade Cocoon for the time being. Fantastic backgrounds and uber-fun monster-mixing conspire to create an RPG with actual replay value (the madness!). Crave passed on PS Grandia for this



The idea of combining an FF7 Monster RPG with Rancher sounded like a dream come true. Spending some quality time with *JC*, it's not exactly what I expected, but

it's still a nice package. Nice visuals, cool ideas, and great voice acting make this a strong title, despite that it's kind of slow to start off with (not on the same level as Xenogears tho ... Zzzzz). fan of the music (Zamfir, maybe?),

but give it a try before you buy.

With a solid lineup of role playing games to look forward to this year, PlayStation owners are in for a treat. Jade Cocoon ups that number by one. The character design is

by the creator of Totoro — something which I really liked. It's a breathtaking break from the norm. I really dig the dea of capturing monsters and using them later. Though slow at times, the game isn't without its flaws; some of the back-





**Konami Classics PlayStation** Konami Retro

Shaolin's Road is probably the only game on this disc that I'd consider playing for more than 15 minutes — the others are nice as a brief diversion (and for ruining any sense of nostalgia I once felt,

<argh>). Beyond that, I'd like someone to explain to me why Konami is allowed to publish this, while Capcom can't release certain chapters of Capcom Generations in the States. Something's rotten in Denmark, Sony...

 $\frac{1}{10}$  7  $\frac{1}{10}$  5  $\frac{1}{10}$  3

Dangohead Cerberus are seriously smitten with Yie-Ar Kung Fu and this whole collection, I'm with ECM on this one. Old games don't usually age well, and if

you're playing this game for more than 45 minutes, I'll be shocked. At first. I wanted to see a collection of Konami games like Rush N' Attack and Jailbreak, but after seeing how Yie-Ar has aged less than gracefully, I'm not so sure any gracefully, I'm not so more... A rental... if that.

2 R 8 M 5

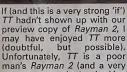
Okay, you know these games don't look good. You know all these games are hella old. Fortunately, these reasons won't deter me from highly recommending Konami Classics. Bringing back memories of Super Cobra and Time Pilot was

almost enough to make this hardened dango shed a tear. But the real gem in this collection is *Yie-Ar* <sniff> *Kung Fu* (grabbing box of tissues). Having Yie-Ar

is reason enough to buy this title. 68 9 M7 05



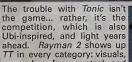
Tonic Trouble Nintendo 64 **UbiSoft** 3D Platformer



poor man at that). Lackluster in almost every way (music, graphics, control), after playing *RM2* extensively, this is pretty much unforgivable. How this game was even spawned from the same vat as RM2

is beyond my ken... stay away!





fun, control and polish. *Tonic's* gameplay is decent, but I get the feeling this game was rushed (is that Rayman on the horizon?). If it had come out a year ago, Tonic would have scored higher. But, Ubi's better half is just too

close to get into this one.



Uhh, I don't like this game. It's an exercise in tedium. I know Eggo loves these kind of games, he'll play anything. With the Nintendo 64 in serious need of quality games third parties need to step up the pace. Rayman 2, that I like, but I'm not

really sure this is from the same company. Did the "B" team handle development? Audio-visually, presentation is expoor. Crying shame because this extremely

poor. Crying shame because could have been so much more

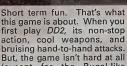




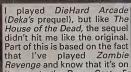
Dynamite Deka 2 Dreamcast (import) Sega

Good clean fun. A bunch of weapons, explosions, and baddie after baddie... more meat for the Eggo grinder. There's a lot to like about Dynamite Deka 2, but every-

one who picks up the con-troller says the same thing, over already?" Because of the "What?! Because of the length, I recommend renting over buying. Still, it's an impressive initial effort for a DC beat 'em up. Much, much better than Fighting



(except for the Rugal-like cheapass end boss), and while finishing all the missions will open up more missions, it's like eating another bag of Double Stuff Oreos after having gobbled a bag before in five minutes. Good rental, but not



its way to the DreamCast. Fast-paced and very playable, Dynamite Deka 2 isn't as long as one would expect. There's enough here to keep you busy until Zombie Revenge. It looks much better than its arcade



under construction





can't bring myself to like E.G.G.. but in the respect, I don't entirely dislike E.G.G. Sure, the battle system and character design isn't anything new, yet there is some thing about E.G.G. that remind

under construction

under

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of RPGs I played on the Genesis and SNES The hand-drawn backgrounds look really clean - reminding me of Saga Frontier 2. If this makes it over to our side of the hemisphere, some improvements will need to be made.

 $\frac{1}{6} \frac{6}{10} \frac{1}{10} \frac{$ 

l admit that I didn't finish EGG but you don't have to play five minutes into the game to know that EGG is average. Bad animation, boring battles, and uninspiring music make this title, just plain... blech. blech.

There are some colorful 2D visuals, and a strange story, but a first generation RPG on the DC should at least be, in my opinion, above average. EGG is just plain average, bordering on boring crap. RPG fans will just have to wait longer...

and the DC RPG vigil continues... How many Beyond the Beyonds must we see before our first Suikoden? I thought EGG was it, I thought this was goin' to be the one... But this

game is summed up in one word: disappointing. Maybe my expectations were high, but with a new console, you expect a lot, right? EGG never manages to rise above mediocrity. There's still hope out there with *Climax Landers* and

Project Ares, but not this...



E.G.G. Dreamcast (import) Hudson Action/RPG

We all know HyperFighting is the pinnacle of SF perfection. And when we got our hands on 3rd Strike, I was skeptical about Turtle Parry Fighter. However, even despite the

overpowering parry system (with the red parry added to make it even more of a parry-fest) I thoroughly enjoyed 3rd Strike. While the new characters aren't that fun to play, minus Makoto (aka Akane Tendo), I would definitely play this in the arcades. And so should you.

Pac-Man for the Neo Geo Pocket, that's Crush Roller. The basic idea is the same, but the objective is different construction Instead of consuming all onscreen pellets you must paint

the entire playfield with a given color. While you do this, non-descript enemy creatures attempt to rain on your parade. Crush Roller is a decent cross of puzzle with arcade action. I'd prefer the real Pac-Man, but if this is all we're get-

ting, I'll deal with it.

Good fighting games rock, no matter what console they happen to be on. Fatal Fury is a perfect Mini-Me sized version construction of Neo Geo's ex-flagship fighter. Combined that with the Neo Geo Pocket's super-responsive D-pad, and you're left with

another must-own fighting game. Heck, go outdoors and play this one in the sunlight; the colors come through like never before. Speedy gameplay and nice stereo tunes - I can't complain.

68 8 M 7 0 6 100

I'm not sure if I like the Neo Geo Pocket conversion of Metal Slug. Too much was left on the cutting room floor in the transition for me to remain construction quiet. The music is by far the worst I've heard on the Neo

Geo Pocket. And the colors don't pop out like in other games for the tiny system. The dreaded Metal Slug attack has been axed. If you can look the other way, Metal Slug still proves to be very much an action-

filled arcade-style game. 68 P7 M4 05

Samurai Shodown has always been one of my favorite fighters, sans the 3D attempts.
can't believe the Neo Geo
can't believe the Neo Geo
construction ers, sans the 3D attempts. I Samurai Shodown is a testa-

ment to SNK engineers in Japan. In-game backdrops have animation and change from round to round. Most of the Samurai favorites are represented well - plus some new faces. The audio is low key, but some tunes are hot, like

Nakururu's. My money is ready... 8 8 8 M 7

I know what you're all thinking, "It's Street Fighter... Eggo has to like it, right?" Wrong. I like Street Fighter II, not III. While I don't think parrying is as bad as everyone makes it out to be.

to be my favorite. I'd much rather play Alpha
2 or Turbo Hyperfighting than SFIII: Third
Strike. It's not a bad game, and I will play it, but my heart lies elsewhere... back in the glory days of redizzy combos, classic matchups, and CPS-2.

I hate addicting games... but in a good way. Example? Crush You are a paintbrush. Your job? Paint a neighbor-hood street, while avoiding those viciously, cute, tadpole-

like monsters. Sounds easy, right? Sure it is. Think you can play only one game? I bet you the Virtual On machine I don't have that you not only cannot, but you will not. CR will make you cry in frustration as you play, but you won't be able to stop playing.

Another Neo Geo Tighting game? 'Scuse me while I try to contain my excitement... fighting games? Never liked

the way they played... and after playing Street Fighter II in arcades competitively for over six years, can you blame me for pitching my tent in Capcom's corner, as opposed to the competition? I do admire the bountiful animation... and I'm not just talkin' Mai either.

P 6 M 7

There should be a Nobel Prize in the video game industry, whoever thought of taking all the great action and personality from Metal Slug and making it portable is a genius — not that ECM or I haven't

made that suggestion before. While using the "Option" button to switch between your gun and grenades is a tad bit annoying, there isn't much more I can ask for in Metal 1st Mission... well, except

Metal Slug: 2nd Mission! 69 89 M7

not fair, I know, but NeoGeo fighters have never done it for me. Try as I might to like 'em, Street Fighter II has always been the one I keep going back to (I know, the

whole Capcom programmers leaving for SNK, blah blah, but still...). I just don't like the way this game plays, despite all However, if you're a psycho its character. Neo Geo freak who has dreams of Blue Mary (aka Shidoshi), don't let my judgment sway your purchase.

This is about as close to perfection as SF3 is going to get (a good thing too, since it's the last one) with stunning color and brilliant animation. The problem with all of that is the The

damn parrying is still busted. It would have been great if there was sort of parry meter (aping SFA3's block meter) to cut down on relentless reverse turtle battles (the first one to get a punch in wins). Still, a great game that never got the attention it deserved.

Among the crop of NGPC games this month, this and Metal Slug are my two recommended titles. While MS is for shooter fans, this is like Pac-Man without the dots. Very

easy, quick to pick up, and great for playing a short time when you have some idle minutes. Even casual gamers will appreciate *Crush Roller's* simplicity. Because painting roads is not exactly rocket science, I'm not sure you'd call it a puzzle

game, though.

three. While Terry Bogard is still one of my fav fighting game character designs ever, it's time to put the Fatal Fury

series to sleep (just make sure Terry and Mai keep going in KoF and I'll be happy). While Dango was apparently pretty enthralled with it (too many blows to the head, I guess) I'd recommend the other Pocket fighters WAY before I'd push this on anyone (file it away with SamSho 3D).

This game is decidedly Metal Slug, which is a good thing... but something just doesn't feel right. All the elements are there for me to like this game a lot, but the action just isn't as intense on the NGPC as it is

in the arcade. On the other hand, I like the music, and the play is still fun and addicting, albeit... smaller in scale and less exciting than its arcade counterpart. Hitting option to switch to grenades is annoying

but you can get used to it. 8 9

This is the fighting game goods. While Fatal Fury was a tad lackluster, SamSho suffers from no such tarnish. Taking

all the gameplay that made earlier arcade versions classics (chapters 1 & 2), with fantatic visuals and blazing gameplay (imagine that, a portable fighting game that plays well). BTW, this game is part of SNK's parole after the utter tragedy of two ill-fated

ventures into the world of 3D SamSho, <blech>.

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Crush Roller **Neo Geo Pocket Color** SNK Puzzle

**Fatal Fury** SNK



**Metal Slug 1st Mission Neo Geo Pocket Color** SNK



Samurai Shodown 2 **Neo Geo Pocket Color** SNK **Fighting** 

Street Fighter 3 Arcade Capcom **Fighting** 

**Neo Geo Pocket Color Fighting** 

Action

8 46 6



"A must have for any serious gamer...the DexDrive's the coolest accessory to hit console gaming since analog and rumbling joysticks." Gamepro

"★★★★★...easily one of the coolest new ideas in PlayStation peripherals." PSM

"InterAct's DexDrive is by far the most incredible peripheral we have seen for the N64." IGN64

"The simple genius of the DexDrive never ceases to

This device is such a great idea, it's hard to believe no one has produced one before." Next Generation





In a game, as in life, what goes around, comes around. Give an all-star roster, take a level you didn't know existed. Brag about a high score, accept someone else's to challenge. Whatever can be saved. can be traded. Hook the DexDrive to your PC, and email saves to your friends. Or your competition.

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PlayStation.



DexPlorer

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There was a time when gamers cried foul about the lack of role-playing games. But it looks like those dark days are behind us, because there's a slew of RPGs poised to crowd your Christmas stocking this year. Enough so, in fact, that we've dedicated much of this issue to

informing you of what titles to look for later this year.

Funny how almost all the RPGs coming this year are on the PlayStation. It's certainly the platform of choice to develop for if you're doing an RPG. So where, I ask you, are the N64 and Dreamcast (granted, it's still early) RPGs? We know both systems are more than capable of delivering some incredible stories replete with eye-glazing graphics and mind-blowing music. So why are non-PS owners on the outside lookin' in, clutching copies of Quest 64 and Evolution? True, there is hope on the horizon with Ogre Battle N64 and Baldur's Gate on the DC with promised Internet play... but what lies beyond that? Let's hope there's more to cheer about next year for Nintendo and Sega owners.... Now without further ado, flip the pages and peruse GameFan's RPG blowout.

So Tell Us, Eggo, What Makes an RPG an RPG?

This messy little question has stymied more minds than 'what's the meaning of life', 'and 'is Shidoshi man, woman, or a little of both' (we'll probably never know the answer to the latter). However, for our purposes, we'll define an RPG as any game that features an element of 'leveling up' and 'experience' gaining melded to a storyline that develops in a meaningful way as the game unfolds (yes, it's a bit amorphous, but it's the best we could come up with). For instance, while you do gain experience in Castlevania: SotN, the lack of an unfolding storyline prohibits it from attaining true RPG status. Armed with that knowledge, let's dive face-first into GameFan's Top Ten RPGs!



Eggo's Top 10 RPGs

1) Final Fantasy III (SNES) — The pinnacle of all things Final Fantasy, no other RPG is so well-rounded.

2) Dragon Force (SS) - My favorite Saturn game, I LOVED Dragon Force any game with 200-man battles scores points in my book.

3) Final Fantasy II (SNES) — The first Final Fantasy | played... just listen to the music and shed a collective tear because Square EA dropped this from FF Anthology.

4) Final Fantasy VII (PS) — RPGs never looked like THIS!

5) Chrono Trigger (SNES) — The non-FF Square RPG which I played to death on SNES... now we're just waiting for the sequel. 6) Phantasy Star 2 (SG) — Simple equation: Genesis + RPG = Phantasy Star 2

7) Final Fantasy Tactics (PS) - Epic story, battles, and music.

8) Star Ocean: The Second Story (PS) — One of the best RPGs in recent memory engrossing, entertaining, and incredibly deep. 9) Panzer Saga (SS) — The Saturn's answer to Final Fantasy VII.

10) Shadowrun (SG) — The SNES version is supposed to be better, but this is what I played — great music, story, and... the

matrix (long before the movie).

It's no surprise that half the games on my list are made by Square. So few other companies have been able to bring together the total package time and time again. Believe it or not, Thousand Arms is a shoe-in for the Top 10 RPGs of all time. But, since the U.S. version is still unfinished, I'll have to restrain my enthusiasm till it's released. Judging from the preview disc, though, TA has a lovable cast of characters, splendid graphics, original ideas, a wonderful sense of humor, and most importantly - personality.

Dango's Top 10 RPGs

1) Final Fantasy Tactics (PS) — It simply doesn't get any better than this. If there is anything wrong with this game, it's that it leaves you wanting more... much more.

2) Panzer Dragoon Saga (SS) — Awesome graphics, excellent story, and innovative gameplay, PDS is the best RPG on the Saturn, hands down.

3) Final Fantasy 3 (SNES) — One of the few RPGs that I've played more than twice. Great music, memorable characters, and an unfor-

gettable story, everyone has to play this.
4) Tales of Phantasia (SNES, PS) — It's a real shame that few will know how good an RPG Tales of Phantasia is with its great battle system and cool character designs.

5) Dragon Force (SS) — One of the bestloved gems on the Saturn... and it's not hard to see why when you have awesome battle music, unique character classes, and 200 man bloodbaths.

6) Shining the Holy Ark (SS) — Yes, you never really see your character in the game. Yes, it's an old school dungeon RPG. And yes, I love this game.

7) Dark Savior (SS) — Five different stories, all interlacing together and some of the most difficult action sequences ever. But definitely one of the most satisfying gaming experiences.

8) Shining Force III (SS) — The third installment of the Shining Force series, it's just too bad we couldn't get all three CDs like those lucky gamers in Japan.

9) Phantasy Star 2 (SG) — All RPGs must pay homage to what I believe is the grand-daddy of all console RPGs with great music, groundbreaking features, and a unique setting.

10) Suikoden (PS) — Yeah, the story couldn't be more linear, but Suikoden has left me with some great RPG memories, with its great soundtrack and plethora of characters.

I don't consider myself an RPG connoisseur like Eggo, and I am very selective about what RPGs I'll experience. I'm not a Final Fantasy freak, nor do I keep reminiscing about past glory days of RPGs, mainly because I believe there are present day titles that simply outgun those great RPGs from the golden days of 8 and 16-bit. Langrisser, Lunar 2 (which was number 11 for the record), and Breath of Fire were great back in the day, but they can't hold a candle to the likes of Dragon Force, Final Fantasy Tactics, and Shining Force III. Of course there will be timeless classics like Phantasy Star 2 and Final Fantasy 3 (6 in Japan) which will probably stand the test of time. But I think RPGs will get better and better, as long as they remain games and not "interactive experiences."

# El Niño's Top 10

1) Might & Magic II (SG) — An "American" RPG through and through. By far the longest and most in-depth RPG to ever hit the Genesis.

2) Final Fantasy Tactics (PS) — Square's best game, ever. Gorgeous and engrossing. I need a sequel!!

3) Shadowrun (SG) — One of the most original RPGs, it combined real-time fighting and role-playing perfectly.

4) Shining Force CD (Sega CD) — Great music, great story, and great gameplay. Made my Sega CD worth owning.

5) Ogre Battle (SNES) - This little gem from Enix was a masterpiece in RPG strategy games.

6) Phantasy Star 2 (Genesis) — Who needs Final Fantasy when you have Phantasy Star? 7) Dark Wizard (Sega CD) — Probably the most underrated RPG of its time. Excellent replay value.

8) Dungeon Explorer (Sega CD/TG-CD) —

Taking the idea of Gauntlet to the next level. An amazing experience.

9) Suikoden (PS) — Over a hundred characters and an epic battle mode made this very entertaining.

10) Buck Rogers (SG) — A great PC port of a great sci-fi adventure.

That's right, no Final Fantasy series... just the way it should be. I know most of you will take issue with my choices, but I think most of you have crummy taste in RPGs. The obsession with Japanese RPGs baffles me, considering how much better U.S. titles are (Bard's Tale, Wasteland, Might & Magic and a little license I like to call AD&D... need I go on?). It was actually a toss-up with my top three, but ECM made me rank 'em anyway. It's unfortunate that so few quality RPGs manage to make it to the console. The power of the Dreamcast and PlayStation 2 should hopefully change that (now if Japanese developers could just come up with an original idea, we may see something better than the standard hero/sidekick/little love-struck girl drivel that keeps coming out). Shidoshi is gonna kill me...

# Cerberus' Top 10 RPGs

1) Y's I & II (TG-CD) — Amazing story and a beautiful musical score - simply time-

2) Final Fantasy II (SNES) - The one before the one that started it all. A mustplay for fans of the series.

3) Phantasy Star (Master System) — One of my first real experiences with Role Playing Games. Beat the pants off anything at the time.

4) Phantasy Star II (SG) — A fitting sequel and an awesome game on its own

5) Y's IV (PC-Engine Super CD) — Falcom's way of saying sorry for Y's III. Apology accepted.

6) Dragon Warrior (NES) — Another of my

initial encounters with RPGs. It kept me going all the way to the end.

7) Star Ocean: The Second Story (PlayStation) — Just what I like, a sequel that destroys its predecessor. Buy this game.

8) Final Fantasy III (SNES) — I wasn't as involved in this story, but what a great game. 9) Final Fantasy Tactics (PlayStation) Not your standard Square game, I still haven't been able to devote the right amount of time to this puppy.

10) Lunar: The Silver Star (Sega CD) — Shall we call this one an epic comedy? The story kept me going, but I think the pop culture references did, too.

Over the last decade, the amount of time I can dedicate to role-playing games has dwindled. This is a shame because it looks like there's some really cool stuff over the horizon. After class, sometimes before, some friends and I would get together to play RPGs. The more people we had work ing on the mazes and puzzles, the better: I can remember staying up until 3am with a few friends and finally defeating Dark Force in *Phantasy Star II* — hell, we leveled up our characters to 50. The day Sega does a

Phantasy Star for the Dreamcast is the day my friends and I call in sick for a month.

# ECM's Top 10 RPGs

1) Final Fantasy Tactics (PS) — an epic in every sense of the word, and the greatest RPG that Square has ever produced (even if they had to 'borrow' the Ogre team).

2) Grandia (SS) — a revelation on Saturn, and a game that took 18 months to finally make the journey to the PlayStation where's it's still a phenomenal game. It's also the only Japanese RPG I ever felt compelled to play all the way through.

3) Panzer Saga (SS) — if Sega ever had to prove that they're every bit as capable of designing utterly brilliant RPGs as arcade games, here's the pudding.

4) Final Fantasy 2 (SNES) — easily the best of the FF series (bah, to 3 and 7), with the most coherent story, and the Porom and Polom sequence that brought tears to gamers' eyes (and a big "thanks a lot, Square" for snubbing it in their upcoming FF Anthology, <grumble>).

5) Lunar: Eternal Blue (SegaCD) — Game Arts and Studio Alex prove that they can make an RPG to rank among the best Square has to offer with a reasonably solid translation by Working Designs.

6) Shining Force 2 (SG) — the finest game in the stunning Shining series of games (including Shining the Holy Ark, Shining Wisdom, Shining in the Darkness, et al).

7) Dark Savior (SS) — Climax's shining star, and yet another reason why Saturn was a superior RPG machine to PS up till its untimely demise.

8) Shadowrun (SNES) — the better rev of SR (by Data East), this version crushed the unwieldy Genesis rev by a mile with some truly spooky, edge-of-your-seat gameplay. 9) Dragon Force (SS) — if Sega knows one type of RPG, it's the strategy RPG. This Sega-developed, Working Designslocalized title is easily the finest translation done by the latter, with a very serious story and solid army-style battles.

10) Terranigma (SNES) - braving the harsh depths of the Atlantic ocean to score a copy of this UK-only port of Quintet's (ActRaiser, Soul Blazer, etc.) finest hour is more than worth the journey — now if only they'd have kept the streak alive with Solo

Crisis, <sigh>.

While I've had a hard time getting into RPGs over the last couple of years due mainly to the rise of titles like Final Fantasy VII warping the RPG scene beyond recognition coupled with a blight of unbelievably generic, cookie-cutter RPGs, I'm probably the least rabid RPG fan in all of GameFan-dom. That, however, does not preclude me from realizing that there were some truly remarkable examples of the genre crafted in both 16 and 32-bit molds— examples that have led to sleepless weeks in the past. Now if only the DC can get its act together and give me some intense '128-bit' experiences, the genre could be revived in my jaded eyes...









# The Final Countdown

How ironic is it that Hironobu Sakaguchi named his brainchild *Final Fantasy* back in 1987? Twelve years later, with eight incarnations of the series in Japan (and a rumored ninth in development), offshoot games like *Final Fantasy Tactics* and *Final Fantasy Legend* (on GameBoy... <ick>), and a Final Fantasy movie by Square Pictures in the works... there's nothing 'final' about it. In fact, the most popular and successful console RPG series in America is so 'non-final' that we're drowning in a deluge of Final Fantasy games this year. Not that that's a bad thing, Square, keep 'em coming... and about that sequel to FF Tactics...

So where was I? ...Oh yeah, VIII. That's the one with Squall and Rinoa, that bad-ass Seifer, and the witches Edea and Alty. Well, shortly (no offense, ECM) after E3, the first English playables of FFVIII were released to the ravenous media types, and now we're here to give you the full scoop. By the way, there are no changes (like new monsters or CG) to FFVIII from the Japanese version, other than the English text... so don't expect to see a FFVIII International.

# I Love You, Man...

Agree with it or not, you'd better get used to it now. Love is the theme of Final Fantasy VIII. Yes, you heard me right, 'love' as in Hugh Grant kissing horse-mouthed Julia Roberts in the chick-flick Notting Hill. Now while FF8's theme may leave you reaching for a barf bag, it's all part of the master plan by Square to broaden the appeal of the game and attract a newer audience than the everyday sausage. Point is, the game's theme and setting are more modern and mature now... so get used to it! If you're looking for more of a traditional RPG, with knights and dragons and white mages and black mages... then you're not gonna find that here. Not to say there isn't magic in FF8, there's plenty of it, but the old-school characters and castles have died... along with the









classic super-deformed look of prior Final Fantasy games.

FF8's story follows two main characters, Squall and Laguna, and their subsequent love interests. But just because this game has a love theme song (by famous Hong Kong singer Faye Wong), don't think that Square has lost their edge. There's still plenty of action and excitement in VIII. Once-mighty towns are demolished, powerful mon-sters are wielded as pawns, epic battles are fought, and bitter rivalries are fueled... It's just that the story goes lovey dubby at times... <ugh>.

# Story Goes a Li'l Somethin' Like This...

Since you're all hard-core gamers who play nothing but imports, you already know the game's story, so I don't need to go over it... On second thought, in case you have a little broth-

er who's still learning kanji, I should probably cover it one more time...

The game starts off with the adventures of Squall, a student at the Balamb Garden military training school. He's your basic All-American boy who: develops a rivalry with fellow Garden student Seifer, falls in love with Rinoa, then watches as Rinoa pines away for Seifer. Course there's more to it than that, but you don't want to hear about governments, resistance fighters, witches, and tree-huggers, right? Well, maybe the witches are kinda interesting, but I'll let you discover them on your own.

But wait, there's more! From time to time in the game, Squall and friends fall to the ground clutching their heads in pain. And no, it's not because of the game's love song Eyes on Me (which is pretty good); rather, they keep having dreams of a mysterious Galbadian soldier named Laguna. Enter main character #2: A father and a soldier, Laguna's having second thoughts about life in the military and wants to be a journalist. What he has to do with Squall... you'll have to find out.



NOT ENOUGH.

**DEVELOPER - SQUARE** 1 PLAYER

PUBLISHER - SQUARE/EA AVAILABLE SEPT. 7TH

Talk to me, Hudson...

All right, enough with the story, the localization is coming along nicely. The first disc (of four) is translated entirely, and the English in the preview disc is OK. Some parts are very funny and well done, but the disc as a whole seems to lack that overall fine polish which *FFVII*'s translation had. Note that the preview ROM we were given was 70-80% complete, so there's a chance that a few copy editors will smooth out the kinks before this game's release.

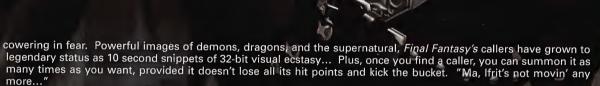
# G.F. Forever!

If you look closely at a screenshot of a *Final Fantasy VIII* battle, you'll see the command "G.F." Though I wish it stood for *GameFan*, G.F. is short for Guardian Force, which is the new summon spell in *VIII*.

FFII had callers, III had espers, VII had

materia, and VIII has Guardian
Forces. No matter what
you call it, they all have
the same effect: leaving gamers hollering with excitement and
monsters





Like the espers in *Final Fantasy VI*, the GFs in *VIII* have more of a role in the game than being just your ordinary summon spell. They also act as sub-characters of sorts, with their own: hit points, potions (specific to GFs), experience points (AP), and learned abilities. Like your normal characters, Guardian Forces earn experience points in battle, which go towards special abilities learned over time. Some of these are: increased hit points, refining magic

from items, and revealing hidden draw points and save points. Many of the classic *Final Fantasy* battle commands are learned from GFs as well: Steal/Mug, Defend, and Coin (throw money away... just like Cerberus!).

Conjunction Junction, what's... your... function?

Junctioning is the latest and greatest play mechanic Square has devised for VIII. The equivalent of the materia system in VII, junctioning requires you to hookup Guardian Forces to your character in order to do anything. Without a GF junctioned, you only have one option in battle: fight. Once it's equipped, however, you're allowed to customize the remaining three battle commands: Magic, Draw, G.F. (summon), Card, Steal, Item, Mad Rush, etc.















Early on, you'll have to choose who's a magic user, who's the "fight" guy, and who's the item-wielding healer. Because there's nothing like the feeling of helplessness in battle with a magic user who can't use items... with "mute" cast on him. On the other hand, you don't want a bunch of wimps who can all heal, but can't dish out the punishment either.

In addition to customizing your battle commands, junctioning also lets you link individual magic spells to character traits (such as hit points and strength). Also, you can bestow elemental properties (fire, ice, bio, etc.) to your attacks and defense.

# "Have at you, Snake... DRAW!!"

Final Fantasy has had constant innovation with every game released. Be it espers, materia, Sabin's inputted Blitz techniques, limit breaks, etc., the game was the same, but there was always something different being added. Well, FFVIII is no different... there's a ton of new ideas in the game, but the most important is the magic system.

The magic system has been stagnant for quite a while, but now FFVIII introduces the completely new 'draw' system. Forget about magic points and ethers. Every spell is now like a scroll—a one-time use, then it's gone. This magic is 'drawn' from enemies in battle; but it takes a turn to draw. Unlike the demo of FFVIII (in which drawing was tedious), you now get 1-10+ uses of a spell from a single draw, so it isn't as time-consuming as you'd think.

If you're too scared to risk your neck in combat, there's also the quick and easy method of using draw points in town. Just pull up to one, like a gas pump, and draw for free... the only 'draw'back to this is the time needed for the point to replenish. You should also know that every monster has unique spells which you can draw; and some bosses even have Guardian Forces you can draw. Just don't overstay your welcome, or you'll be push-







ing up daisies with a broken Gunblade.

Once spells are drawn, you can organize them in your menus later. Spread the magic out over all your characters... or stockpile them all into one central magic user. It's up to you.

Lastly, instead of just stocking magic from the draw command, you can also use a magic spell drawn from an enemy right away. Of course, you only get one use out of the spell, instead of 15, but if you're short of healing, there's nothing like drawin' Cures from that boss in front of you. Thanks!

# What Do You Mean There's No Armor!?!

For the first time in FF history, there's no armor in the game! For that matter, there aren't really different weapons to equip either (no bronze sword, iron sword, mithril sword, etc.). Throughout the game, you always have the same weapon. **But**, you are able to upgrade it for more damage and a different look. With all the time you spend worrying about junctioning, not having to equip new armor and weapons is almost a relief.



Money Doesn't Grow on Trees, Silly... it comes from SeeDs.

While we're on the topic of Square shocking gamers, there's also no money earned from fighting in FFVIII. Gil is now doled out over time, dependant on your SeeD level. Once you graduate from Garden, you're given a SeeD level, which is based on your performance. The higher that SeeD level, the more money you're allotted come 'payday.' Play well later in the game and your SeeD level can rise, so don't fret about not making enough gil to survive. It's strange to be 'paid' regularly in a role-playing game; it's like having an allowance again. "Thanks, Daddy! ...Can I borrow the car tonight?"

# Takin' It to the Limit

Limit breaks — in FFVII, they were powerful normal attacks that came out when your character absorbed a lot of damage over the course of many battles. In FFVIII, they're much more accessible... if you're willing to live on the edge ("Feelin' lucky, punk?"). Now, they're more like a desperation attack reminiscent of FFIII; remember when one of those would come out and do 9999 points of damage at the last second? When your character's hit points dip dangerously low, there's a good chance your character will limit break. You can even do it every turn, as long as your character doesn't die or recover his HPs. Some of the limits are so spectacular-looking that they're almost mini summon spells. And, just like in FFVII, characters learn new limit breaks as the game progresses, so you're not stuck with the same attack all the time.

All Right, Already... So When Can I Play?

After reading 10 pages of me babbling about this game over two months, you're probably wondering when it'll finally arrive... When you can finally hold that precious jewel case in your grubby little mitts and squeal in glee... Square has just announced the exact street date, so you should be playing it by September.











# Final Fantasy VIII on PC!

Following the surprising success of Final Fantasy VII on the PC, Square has already announced FFVIII for the PC this year (4th Qtr). The juicy screenshots you're drooling over on this page are PC shots, in their 3D-accelerated glory. Anti-aliasing (no jaggies!), mipmapping, and transparencies never looked so good! When this game's runnin' in high resolution on a monitor, it's a lot easier to appreciate the details and super clean graphics of this game. And hopefully, it won't need a million patches to run this time...











# Evolution of a CHOCOBO

From humble beginnings as just a means of transportation, Chocobo has worked hard and proven that dreams do come true. Now the official mascot for one of the most influential 3rd party developers in Japan, Chocobo is the star of three games with his name on them and has an impressive resume of titles which he has been a part of. Rumored to be making a cameo appearance in Legend of Mana, Chocobo can no longer be typecast as just a Final Fantasy 'car.'





# Final Fantasy IV

Nothing but a beast of burden in FFIV, Chocobo was stuck with the unpleasant job of ferrying the lovers Cecil and Rosa from city to city... But where are they now? Chocobo has obviously had the last laugh.

Final Fantasy V
There from the opening scene of FFV, Chocobo was becoming a star... no longer just a faceless extra...
Chocobo was destined for greatness. Who would've thunk it?





# Final Fantasy VI

Disaster strikes!
While the Japanese
box featured Tina as
the poster girl, the
U.S. FFIII had Mog on
the cover! Not only
that, Moogles played
a larger part than
Chocobo in this
game. "Kupo!"
...ARGH!!





# Final Fantasy VII

Apparently the whole Moogle thing wasn't a hit in FFVI, because FFVII featured Chocobo breeding, racing, ranching, and a summon spell. This is when Chocobo's career really began to take off.

Chocobo's
Mysterious
Dungeon
A million-seller
in Japan, this
game made
Chocobo popular
with the kiddies
and even
spawned a
sequel.





# **Final Fantasy Tactics**

A playable character for the first time in a Final Fantasy game, Chocobo made his debut in Tactics, along with a rainbow of other-colored Chocobos. Chocobo fever was starting to catch on...

# Chocobo Racing

Incredibly cute and cuddly now, Chocobo should be able to pay off those plastic surgery bills with the revenue earned from Chocobo Racing, his third game.







Executive Producer Hironobu Sakaguchi•

Recently, GameFan caught up with Hironobu Sakaguchi (popularly known as the creator of all things Final Fantasy) and asked him to answer these 10 questions.

GameFan: Is there any chance we'll see a sequel to Final Fantasy Tactics? Is the team that did that game still together?

Hironobu Sakaguch: Presently, we have no plans, but simulation RPGs is a genre I like very much. So personally, I would like to pursue a sequel to Tactics.

GF: Square has done a lot with the Chocobo character recently. Any chance we'll see more of Tonberry or Cactrot (Saboten) in a game of their own? Like a Tonberry fighting game or a Cactrot shooter?

HS: A Cactrot shooter sounds interesting.

GF: Is Akira Toriyama doing the character designs for the next Chrono Trigger game?

HS: No, there are currently no plans for Toriyama to do the character designs.

GF: Might we see a U.S. release of Seiken Densetsu: Legend of Mana? (hint hint)

HS: We have not specifically decided at what time Legend of Mana will be released, but we do have plans to release it.

GF: Now that Nintendo is abandoning the cartridge format with their new console, is there any chance you'd do a game on the next-gen Nintendo platform?

HS: Since detailed technical information has not yet been released regarding the next-generation platform for Nintendo, I cannot comment on this particular issue.

GF: So what's next for you after the U.S. Final Fantasy VIII, other than Final Fantasy The Movie?

HS: We are strengthening localization and porting for overseas as well as focusing on international sales. We plan to release Saga Frontier 2 and many other titles in addition to Final Fantasy VIII.

GF: It is too cliched to ask, "What was your favorite Final Fantasy game in the series?" so... "Who was your favorite character in all the

# GameFan Exclusive Interview



Final Fantasy games?" and please don't say, "It's too hard for me to pick just one."

HS: Gogo, an impersonator in Final Fantasy VI (FFIII on SNES).

GF: Do you play games in your free time? If so, what are your favorite games right now?

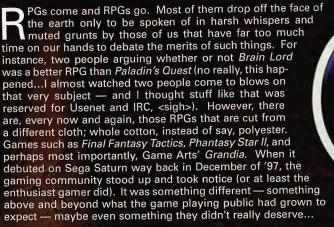
HS: Gameboy Wars 2.

GF: Will directing the *Final Fantasy* movie take up too much time for you to produce games or do you plan to do both?

HS: I go between Japan and Hawaii at least once a month. I produce games in Japan, whereas I focus on the movie while in Hawaii. For a lazy person such as myself, this cycle proves to be the most efficient way for me to work. I'm trying my best.

GF: With eight console games and a *Final Fantasy* movie, do you think you've done everything you've wanted to do with the Final Fantasy universe or do you still have ideas that have yet to be realized?
HS: It's just the beginning.

GameFan thanks Mr. Sakaguchi for taking the time out of his busy schedule (flying between countries, directing the Final Fantasy movie, producing Final Fantasy VIII, and cashing royalty checks) to answer these questions.







Whereas most RPGs went out of their way to foist an overblown, intensely melodramatic storyline, littered with murder, betrayal, crossdressing (<shudder>) and everything else that developers feel makes a game more 'adult,' Game Arts intentionally strove to cast Grandia as something different, something utterly and completely enthralling; something wonderful. It was for anyone and everyone, with plenty of overt and physical humor for a younger audience as well as a fully

developed, grandiose storyline a veteran gamer could appreciate. Sadly, not many took the time to experience it, with sales topping out at not even half a million units (especially disheartening for a game estimated to sell at least a million copies in the early going) and the game didn't reach the wide audience it could have, and more importantly, should have. Blame it on the death of the Saturn; blame it on gamer apathy... whatever the case, Grandia's been given a second chance at life; resurrected, even, to see if it can do what it failed to do all those months ago — this



TO THOSE WHO WAIT...

ECM: GOOD THINGS COME | DEVELOPER - GAME ARTS/ESP | 1 PLAYER

this OK, Mr. painter man? /ou gotta draw me cute just like the real thing, right.♥

**PUBLISHER - SCEA** 

AVAILABLE 3RD QTR.







swamped in utter mediocrity — a platform desperate for some form of salvation in this gamer's eyes...

Above all else, Grandia is a game filled with magic and wonder. Journeying with Justin and company across a world filled with genuine happiness and an almost carefree attitude can be a somewhat humbling experience the first time 'round. After all, aren't RPGs supposed to be mostly depressing affairs, with little, if anything to be happy about? Oh sure, we're generally out to save the world, big heroes that we are, but when was the last time an RPG made you smile out of sheer joy and happiness and not from poor translation or hackneyed jokes? I'd gather it's been some time for all of us...

And while we're now nearing the end of this preview, with the thought, "What just happened?!" playing through your head, keep this in mind: something truly special, something you may not deserve is heading your way very soon. Here's to hoping you know it when you see it, because it's going to be quite a spell before we see it again... ECM





Saturn vs. PlayStation
What's different between the Saturn and PlayStation versions of Grandia? Listed below for perusal at your leisure are some of the items that are different in the PS rendition of this remarkable RPG:

- PlayStation features higher frame rate, but lower res video than its Saturn counterpart.
- · In-game graphics are lower-res, lower frame rate than the Saturn rev.
- Battle backgrounds are JPEG images (less colorful, very flat) and not polygonal as on Saturn.
- Voices are clearer in PlayStation version, but music sounds less 'grand.'

So yes, those of you that are still beating your friends over the head on a daily basis about how the Saturn was superior to the PlayStation can once again open old wounds, get out the salt, and rub it in vigorously (besides, now you can take a break from telling them why DC is better than PSY, right?).





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Visually, the game doesn't disappoint either. Sprites walking on swirling 3D backgrounds a la Xenogears and Grandia. The textures are great and... Zzz... I don't want to bore you with the details; just know that the engine is nice, there's 2D elements, and it's all well-done. As expected, the music is also good, albeit super happy and

fruity like the rest of the game.

But, there's one thing which makes me pause... and that's the dub. The preview copy we have features only Japanese dialogue and English text, and I love it! But the final will be completely different, with English voiceovers and text. The dub's the last piece of the puzzle, which will determine whether this is a good game... or a great game. Please Atlus, don't screw this part up. Or do something to give gamers the option of a subtitled or dubbed purchase.

Almost every race has a dark horse, and in the competition for RPG of the year, Thousand Arms is the big sleeper. While stallions like FFVIII hit the ground running, backed by a mountain of hype and throngs of supporters, Thousand Arms will probably burst out of the gates with a desperate whinny and a dull thud. But just because Atlus' game doesn't have legions of fans right now, doesn't mean it shouldn't (or won't). Do your part. Next time you're in a game store hav-

ing a sausage discussion with the clerk behind the counter, bring up the subject of

Alight your hammer with the Holy Fla

# 

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

Here's a special RPG edition of Coming Soon. Unless otherwise noted, the following games are import titles only, and have not been announced for U.S. release. But they give you a glimpse of what might come our way further down the line.







**Detonator Gauntlet** (Working Designs) — Working Designs' next project is a strategy RPG with mechs. Polygonal battles, multiple endings, and 80 missions. Look for it this fall in the U.S.







Dew Prism (Square) — Here's an action RPG from the creators of Xenogears, Chrono Trigger, and Seiken Densetsu. There'll be a demo of this game packaged with Seiken Densetsu: Legend of Mana on July 15.









**Dragon Quest VII** (Enix) — This has been #1 on Japanese Most Wanted lists for some time. The release date has slipped over and over (now at Nov 26th '99), but it certainly looks worth the wait. You can bet Sony will bring this over, though you probably know the series as *Dragon Warrior*.

Final Fantasy Anthology (Square EA) — Final Fantasy V is finally coming to the U.S., along with FFVI (released as FFII here on SNES), a special music CD, super-handy run button, and new CG movies. Domestic release Winter '99.











**Koudelka** (Sacnoth) — Developed by former employees of Square, *Koudelka* looks promising in its early stages. Set in the 1800's, this horror RPG follows three characters who explore a spooky monastery.

**Legend of Mana** (Square EA) — In the interview this issue, Hironobu Sakaguchi conceded that this game will come to the U.S. eventually, though it's not going to be until next year at the earliest. We'll be talking about this one for a while.









**London Spirits Detective** (Bandai) — As an assistant to a detective in London in the 19th century, you talk to spirits, solve mysteries, and summon demons.

Lunar 2: Eternal Blue (Working Designs) — Did you like the PlayStation version of Lunar, complete with cloth map, sound-track, "Making of" CD, can opener, etc.? Well, the sequel is on its way, and it's scheduled for winter of this year in the States.











**Persona 2: Innocent Sin** (Atlus) — Hey Persona! The sequel to Atlus' early PS RPG arrives in July. Look for import coverage next issue.

Saga Frontier 2 (Square EA) — Originally thought to be a '99 title, Square EA has since pushed the domestic release date off until early 2000. A beautiful 2D game which is better than the first (yippee!).

# BAGARI

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON





Vandal Hearts 2: The Gate Above the Sky
(Konami) — This strategy RPG should be out in Japan
by the time you read this. Expect enhanced graphics
and maps double the size of the original.







Wild Arms: Second Ignition (Sony) — The sequel to Sony's successful Wild Arms is coming. The new action system lets you negotiate jumps, move boxes, and pick up items. In addition to that, there are now multiple story paths to follow. You can also expect fully polygonal, rotatable 3D environments like Xenogears.

# COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON











Harvest Moon (Natsume) — A farm sim/RPG, Harvest Moon 64 offers a lot: new animals, vegetables, dog racing, horse racing, a part-time job system, dirty overalls, and five potential wives! Roll up your sleeves when it comes to the U.S. 3rd Qtr.

Ogre Battle 3 (Nintendo) — The only strategy RPG you need to know about on N64. Should be out in Japan by the time you read this.

# Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon











Baldur's Gate (Sega) — The first U.S. Dreamcast RPG is the much talked-about Baldur's Gate. Just think... Dungeons & Dragons... and a modem to play with other sausages. Are you scared?











Climax Landers (Climax) — Coming to Japan July 29th, this is one of the best-looking DC RPGs yet... from the makers of Landstalker.











Langrisser Millenium (Masaya) — This 3D strategy RPG continues the Langrisser line and should be available in Japan spring of 2000.

**Project Ares** (Sega) — From the creators of *Phantasy Star, Project Ares* is the codename for this DC RPG, which is still early in development. Could this be the much sought after Dreamcast *Phantasy Star* game?

There are also many RPGs we're looking forward to, but which are still too early for screenshots. Some of these are: *Parasite Eve 2, Vagrant Story* (from the creators of *Ogre Battle* and *FF Tactics*), *Chrono Trigger 2, Mother 3* (*Earthbound* in the US), and *Jade Cocoon 2*, to name a few.

'll do my best to refrain from making any bad jokes about Good Times; so work with me, as it's not going to be easy. Dino Crisis is the latest effort by Shinji Mikami, the mastermind behind the wildly popular Resident Evil series. Running on a modified Resident Evil engine, this adventure takes place on Ibis Island.

Now you're probably wondering what separates Dino Crisis from its predecessors. How much of a difference can overgrown lizards make? Well, I'd have to say a whole lot, because the tension factor is 10x more intense than RE. Newfangled enemies and story aren't the only reasons why either; polygonal backgrounds give the game a much more polished look, and the gameplay is lightning fast.

You're probably wondering about the story... In a nutshell, a fourmember special tactics team has been assigned to locate Dr. Kirk, the young super genius behind the "Principle of Clean Energy."





Early on the in the mission, things go awry, and Gale, Rick, and Regina have no way of escaping. The fourth member of the team, Cooper, has the only means of communication, and you find out very quickly that he's indisposed. As Regina, you'll need to explore the massive island and locate Dr. Kirk, as well as find out why lbis Island has been overrun by a species from another era... and you're only armed with a 9mm to begin with.

Though the story may not be as compelling as watching the Umbrella conspiracy unfold, the cool environments and scary surprises will be enough to keep you playing. Nothing beats walking down an isolated hallway and having a velociraptor leap out of the shadows. Sure, it's shades of Jurassic Park, but I'm not complaining.

Real-time polygonal backgrounds enhance the appeal of this game beyond that of Resident Evil. From a visual standpoint, it's a sharp

# ORISIS

looking game, with some similarities to Metal Gear Solid. Single-skinned dinos have a disturbingly realistic appearance. And since the models are single-skinned, you won't see any seams breaking.

Add dynamic lighting for yet another plus. Whereas the RE series didn't have any lighting effects, Dino Crisis really pulls out all the stops. Walk past a light source and watch the engine light Regina accordingly. Even the Raptors and their buddies are affected by surrounding lights.

Various camera angles further that feeling of apprehension.





From the bird's-eye to the scary chase or fixed cams, you won't be disappointed. The stylistic camera placement gives the game a movie-like feel; it's a shame there is no widescreen option available. The Metal Gear influence is present in cut-scenes as well. Instead of transitioning from in-game graphics to computer graphics, Shinji-san opted to further most of the story with ingame graphics. Some segments are expanded through the use of computer graphics, but for the most part, it's smooth in-game transitions.

You won't be reaching for ear-plugs during intermissions anymore; the acting, while nothing to rave about, is significantly better than RE and RE2. Not too much over-acting or line-reading is evident in any part of the spoken script. Plug Dino Crisis in a set of quality headphones or piped through a phat stereo to fully realize the crystal clear audio. Ominous and foreboding, the soundtrack gets the hairs on the back of your neck to point straight up. It truly sets the mood, and there's not a moment when you're not ready for the worst. Capcom Sound Team's musical talents shine through in the orchestrated

under construction

CERBERUS: SO IT'S JURASSIC PRIMIN PARK... IT ROCKS NONETHELESS

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM | 1 PLAYER

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER



hen I was ECM's height, my family and I would have dinner at Shakey's Pizza or a burger joint near our house. This was a Sunday habit that lasted early into high school. Being the young tike that I was, I'd get very impatient waiting for our food. The second time we headed over to the burger place, I asked my dad for a

BONUS 3675







quarter to wile away the time. That first quarter my father handed me to play Donkey Kong affected the rest of my life... I was totally hooked. Sure, I had seen my brother play everything from Pong to Asteroids and more, but nothing beats playing them yourself. From then on I'd always beg my parents to spot me some quarters to test out the latest games. I was even more excited about playing my favorite games than eating dinner.

I was strictly an arcade aficionado until my sister bought me an Atari 7800 — just prior to the

release of the venerable NES. I'd play the occasional console game at a friend's house, but arcades were my life; Yie Ar Kung Fu, Rampage, Road Runner, Paperboy - I played them all. Before, the NES home games couldn't match the graphical quality of arcade games. Now, it seems like arcade games don't stack up to console or PC games.

But all those games I played from 1980-1988 still hold a special place in my heart. The sense of enjoyment I got from old arcade games is hard to











replicate with the games of today. I'm a big fan of any classics compilations and Konami's Arcade Classics is another title to add to my retro-games library. There's a whole lot going on in this compilation. In chronological order, we've got Scramble, Super Cobra, Pooyan, Time Pilot, Roc'N Rope, Gyruss, Circus Charlie, Road Fighter, Yie Ar Kung Fu, and Shaolin's Road. That's a total of 10 games. These aren't just run-of-the-mill either; each one made a lasting impression on anyone that played them.







CERBERUS: IT'S LIKE AN OLD SCHOOL REVIEW ARCADE IN YOUR PLAYSTATION!

DEVELOPER - KONAMI 1-2 PLAYERS PUBLISHER - KONAMI AVAILABLE SEPT.

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Here's a short rundown, in case you didn't play these great games. Scramble and Super Cobra are almost one and the same shooter. Some slight graphical differences separate the two, but when you play them, you'll see. Both games require that fuel cells be collected as you scroll horizontally left to right. Gradius, I'm sure, was inspired by Scramble. Pooyan is an interesting one using meat and arrows as weapons, you must stop wolves from getting to your little pigs. Sets of Lupus will use balloons to fly up and down trying to sneak past you to steal your piggy kids. Time Pilot is a free roaming shooter, maybe the first of its kind. Thunder Force II had a lot of similarities. You assume the role of a climber on a quest in *Roc'N Rope*. With only a flashlight and rope in hand, you climb from platform to platform avoiding enemies and grabbing bonus items. You can blind enemies temporarily with your flashlight, but you're harmless otherwise. Gyruss is a combination of Tempest and Galaga with Toccata and Fugue as background music. Circus Charlie is a simplistic platform game with six different circus-themed events, each one becoming more difficult than the last. Road Fighter is Spy Hunter without weapons and Peter Gunn music.

# ASSICS



Yie Ar Kung

BONS 1670
HI 10000
4420

CHAIN

HI SCORE

147700

Fu was one of the first fighting games, and it's fun today. With two buttons and an eight-way joystick, the lead character could perform up to 16 different attacks that he could use to defeat all 11 opponents. Shaolin's Road looks like a simplistic sequel to Yie Ar Kung Fu. Instead of a complicated attack system, Shaolin's Road concentrated on no-holds-barred battles.

Each stage consisted of a pre-boss stage and a boss encounter. I can't say that I'm as impressed as I was when I first saw these games. Graphically, they're way behind the times. Sadly, if you've never played any of these games or are new to video games, you won't appreciate any of Konami's arcade classics. But to my friends and me, these are worth more than their weight in

gold. I remember sharing info on how to maximize score in *Yie Ar Kung Fu* and *Gyruss*. As with other classic game compilations.

HI122800 IP122800 compilations, it really depends on if you played the games. It's all

about nostalgia, and Konami '80s AC Special is chock full of it. I can't wait to see follow ups with Rush 'N Attack, Gradius, Goonies, Stinger, and Haunted Castle.

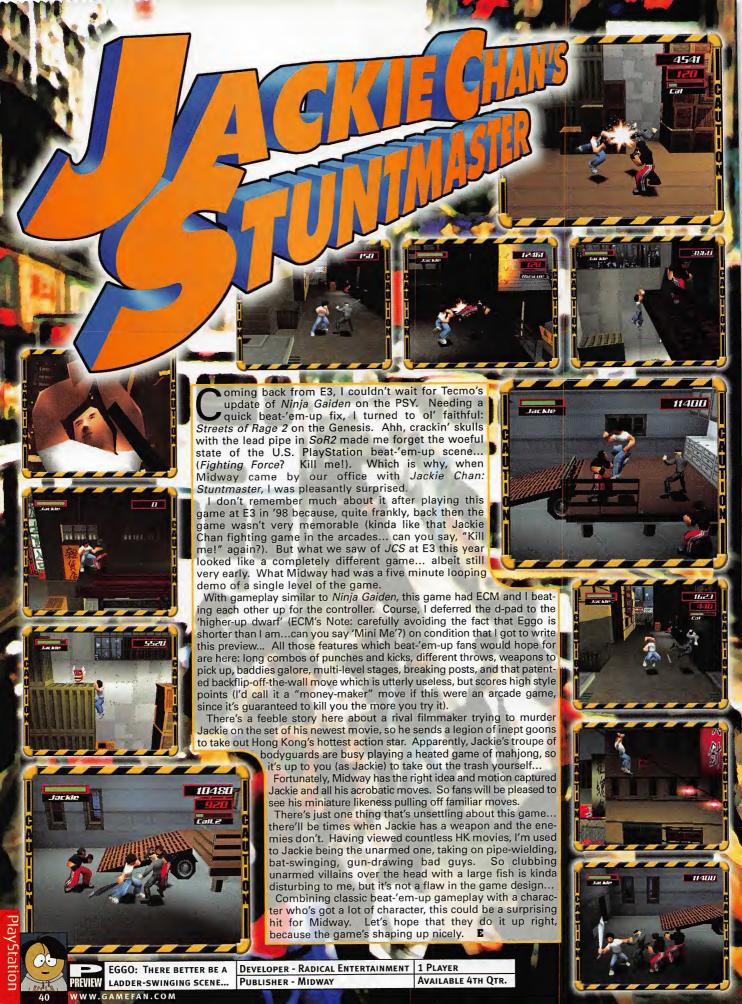
Cerberus has been spotted in the late hours of the night on multiple instances at Pac-Man Arcade in Pasadena, California — an arcade full of retro-gaming glee.

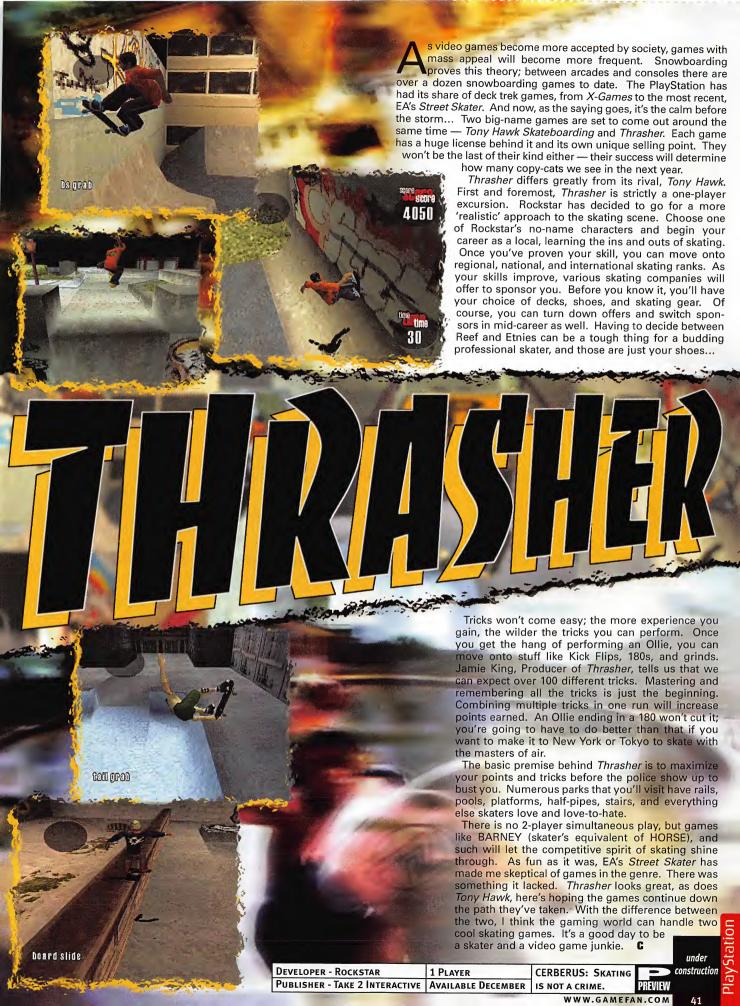






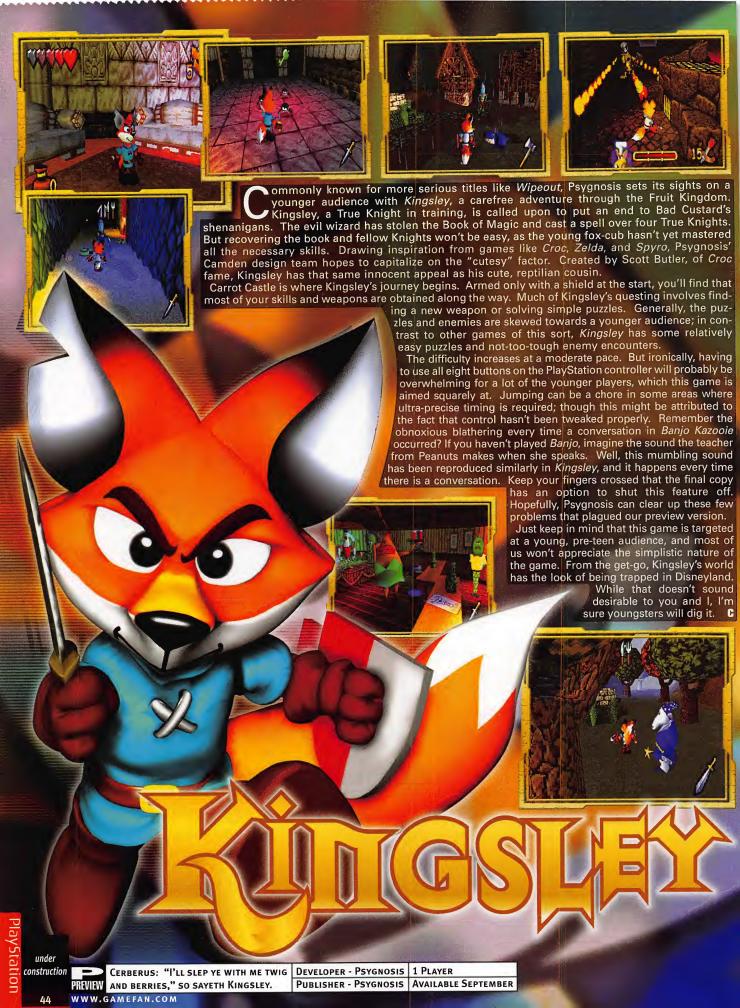














he first time I saw this game, they had to drag me away from it. Finding an original, enjoyable, racing title is a pretty rare occurrence these days. So I was hooked right away. Sure to be a sleeper hit, Sled Storm will greatly increase the hip-quotient of snowmobiling and give gamers a much-needed departure from the boring, standard fare that clogs the genre.

While the idea of a snowmobile racing game may be original, the modes and options are far from. Sled Storm is structured like any racing sim, equipped with a set of playable characters, a compliment of tracks, and the standard Championship, Time Trial, and Quick Race modes. Each of the six racers has his or her own strengths and weaknesses, ranging from top speed and acceleration to handling and stability. The composite of these individual stats results in distinct racing styles for each.





There are over 50 different tricks that you can perform in Sled Storm. While executing 360s and "Heel Clickers" may not help you win the race, your accumulated Trick Points can be used towards the purchase of sled upgrades.

For your enjoyment, there are 14 tracks to race on. They are broken down into two types of course: open tracks and SnoCross. The SnoCross tracks are defined racing tracks with little room for exploration, while the open courses have wider areas to explore (can you say shortcuts?). The open tracks are made available to you as you progress through the game. You will have the option to race during the day or night, as well as alter the weather conditions. It is very cool to feel the different effects that the weather has on the handling of the snowmobiles.

The only problems with the game at this point.



are frame rate and clipping issues. Both, however, are being fixed for the final. The game's physics engine and control are excellent, as are the graphics and the 2-player mode (three and four player contests are a little sketchy).

In typical EA fashion, Sled Storm has been given the audio gloss with the signing of such musicians (if you can actually call them that) as Rob Zombie (how many game soundtracks has he been on anyway — not to mention movie soundtracks), Econoline Crush, and Uberzone. It's pretty sweet to be able to shred through the snow to the sound of blood-pumping Dragula. EN



124kmh





EL NIÑO: ANY GAME WITH PRIVIEW ROB ZOMBIE IS A GOOD GAME.

1-4 PLAYERS **DEVELOPER - EA** PUBLISHER - EA CANADA

AVAILABLE SUMMER



single parachute silently descends from the midnight sky, dropping down somewhere in a copse of trees.

It's the Black Forest shortly after D-Day, but still deep behind enemy lines. Operation Overlord may have been a success, but there is still much to be done before the war is over. The skulking figure of a lone soldier slips into the shadows, on his way toward the first of his objectives.

This is the premise behind EA's newest action adventure title, Medal Of Honor. A first-person shooter. Medal Of Honor puts you in the shoes of an OSS (Office of Strategic Services) operative, on a secret mission behind German lines. You'll be responsible for com-pleting a series of special objectives, all to further help the Allies on their road to victory.

While the developers are trying to avoid the comparison, I'm going to come out and say it, right off the bat. Medal Of Honor is Goldeneye, set in WWII, plain and simple. Replace Bond with an American spy, pepper the missions with a good mixture of straight-up fire fights and

stealth, and add the backdrop of WWII, and there you have it; all of a sudden Oddjob and Jaws are Colonel Klink and Schultz. This is far from a bad thing, though. The PlayStation is sorely in need of a quality corridor shooter and these guys look like they may deliver, big-time.

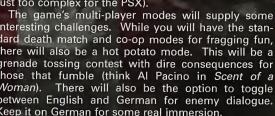
DreamWorks employed the help of Dale Dye, the retired USMC captain who has made a living off consulting for Hollywood war movies. Having helped make films such as Platoon, Born On the Fourth of July and, most recently, Saving Private Ryan more authentic, he seemed to be the perfect man for the job. With his direction, developers have managed to nail the look and feel of what it would be like to be engaged in covert ops, in WWII. He made sure that enemy AI, the weapons and the missions all properly reflected the time. Enemy tactics are authentic, the mission storylines make sense and the weapons perform like they are supposed to (with the exception of the pineapple grenade; the shrapnel effects are

just too complex for the PSX).

The game's multi-player modes will supply some interesting challenges. While you will have the standard death match and co-op modes for fragging fun, there will also be a hot potato mode. This will be a grenade tossing contest with dire consequences for those that fumble (think Al Pacino in Scent of a Woman). There will also be the option to toggle between English and German for enemy dialogue. Keep it on German for some real immersion.

Developers are still at work tweaking such areas as highly destructible environments, multiple bullet contact points (wing that guy in the leg, and watch him

stumble to the ground) and a suspicion meter that enemies utilize when you are in disguise. *Medal* Of Honor could end up being be The Big One, for the PlayStation this Christmas Season.



**DEVELOPER - DREAMWORKS** 1-2 PLAYERS

EL NINO: ROMMEL, TOJO,

Publisher - Electronic Arts | Available Fall | Mussolini... Wimps, all of them.











## Will Elevis

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON











Warpath (EA) — Primal Rage revisited? With some excellent 3D models and a more realistic approach to fighting than Primal Rage, get ready for a fighter of Jurassic size.











Tomorrow Never Dies (EA) — Bond is back in an action/adventure game much different from GoldenEye. More than just a first person shooter, look out for some new fun with 007.











Soul of the Samurai (Konami) - Resident Evil meets Bushido Blade! Choose between a ronin of brute strength or a female ninja of incredible swiftness as you do battle with unnatural evils.









Metal Gear Solid VR (Konami) - With 300 new VR missions, MGS VR Missions will satisfy even the hungriest Metal Gear Solid fan.









Road Rash Unchained (EA) — The road rumbling continues with more weapons, refined combat system, and sidecar buddies! Strap on that helmet tight.

"Thousand Arms fuses hand-drawn sprites, beautiful polygonal landscapes, and interactive anime cut scenes together with stunning results." -Gamers Republic









• Double disk RPG epic packed with theatrical quality animation and 12 hours of spoken dialog! •The first ever RPG/Dating Simulation on the Playstation®!

Unique combination of hand-drawn artwork and wonderful 3-D environments!

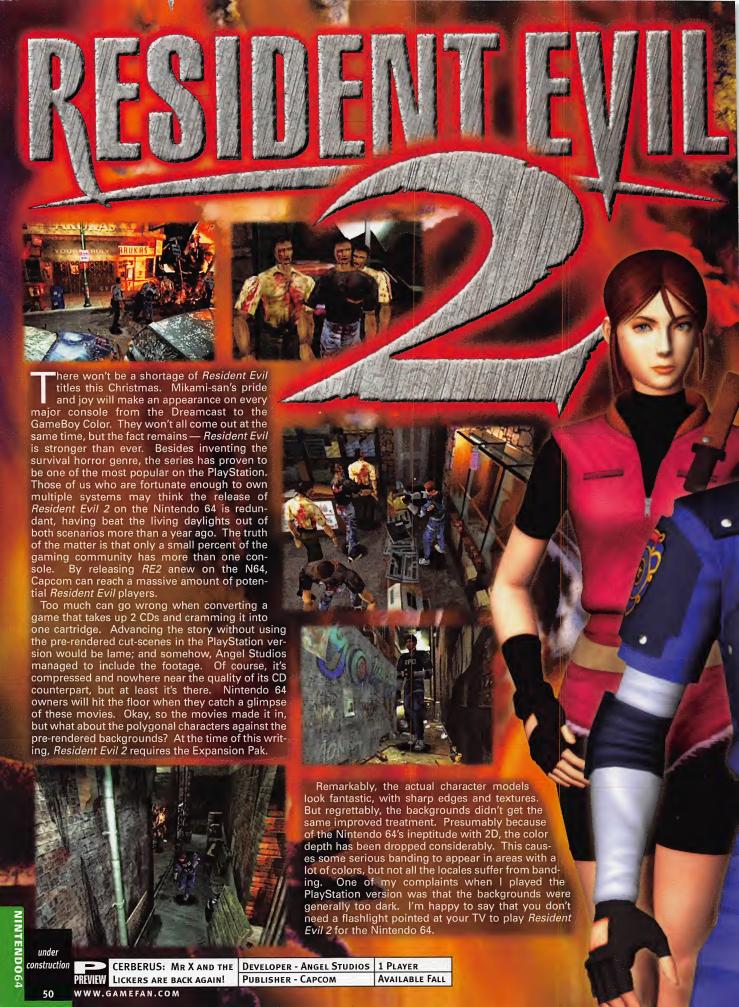


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Hello everyone... my name is Eggo. "Hi, Eggo. ...and I'm a Rayman freak. It's nothing to be proud of, I know... But I was one of the few and the proud who finished the original Rayman... completely. "Ohhhh..." <the whole group shakes their head in knowing sympathy> play like 2D games. I'm talkin' about the feat few have accomplished — saving all 100 electoons... It took "Oooooh... the heart of a lion, the skills of a ninja gamer, and the patience of a one-legged man in a potato sack race. Oh, I remember that dark period of my life... That week or so of constant kicking and screaming, controller throwing, and cursing at the 'Ubi guys' for making such a frustrating 2D platformer. But when it was done, and my sanity returned, I had nothing but praise to sing for Rayman, the former source for my discontent. And then the wait began... DEVELOPER - UBI SOFT | 1 PLAYER EGGO: LOOK MA, NO ARMS. PUBLISHER - UBI SOFT AVAILABLE OCTOBER

Now, four years later, a new Rayman rears its ugly head, and it's 3D... But wait! All is not lost, because this is a 3D platformer which you should be looking forward to. After countless 2D soapbox rants and cries for classic gameplay, we're beginning to see a disturbing trend in video games: 3D games which actually

OK, maybe it's a little early to call it a trend, but games like Sonic Adventure and now Rayman 2: The Great Escape give us hope that not every developer out there is satisfied with making a beautifully texture-mapped

> world, only to let gameplay slide by the wayside. No, the programmers at Ubi Soft are committed to making Rayman 2 play as good as it looks. So while it isn't a 2D game, the endless supply

of mini-games keep the gameplay fresh and exciting at all times. Whether it's jumping from section to section as a pirate ship blasts away the bridge beneath you, or swinging from one pink ring to the next a la the original, Rayman 2 doesn't play like a treasure hunt (find 10 coins to continue) or

switch-flipper (to open the door), like the average 3D platformer. And the countless mini-games (such as water-skiing, snowboarding, rocket-flying, and helicopter-gliding) spice things up even more.

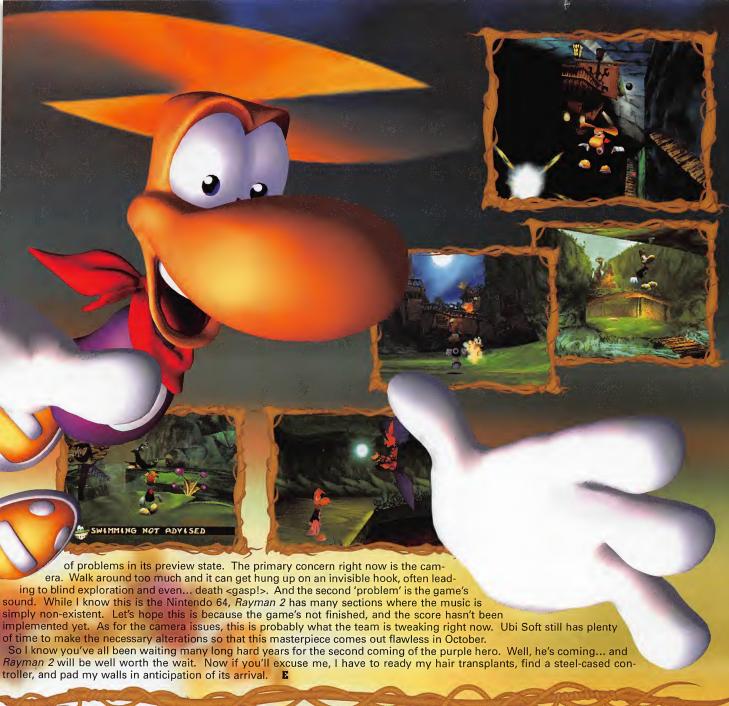
I've avoided talking about the game's graphics to this point because they're good... In fact, they're too good. There are very few N64 games which can hold a candle to Rayman 2's sheer graphical might, and those games are made by developers like Rare, Iguana, and Nintendo — companies you should all pray in the direction of every night before you turn off your N64. While it's easy to ooze over the spectacular, lush environments,

gorgeous hi-res graphics, and vibrant colorful backgrounds, I don't want the visuals to overshadow Rayman 2's most beautiful feature: its gameplay. Both the incredible graphics and the varied gameplay left me anxious to finish every level just so I could see the next.

<Sigh> But all is not well in the land of Rayman 2 - for the game has its share

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## ORGE UPON E CIME....

In 1996 at E3, Rayman 2 was on display at the Ubi Soft booth. As gorgeous as the original, Rayman 2 was initially a 2D game, complete with old school platformer gameplay. Years later, the game returned to E3 with a beautiful, albeit 3D, look. Wailing in anguish, gamers saw one of the last bastions of 2D platforming crumble before our very eyes, under the crushing

weight of the mighty polygon menace.

It's a shame, too, because that 2D sequel played really well. There was one enemy who caught your fist (when you threw it), stuck a stick of dynamite in it, and let it return to you. Now, your fist was a ticking time bomb which you had to avoid, till you found safety behind a wall.

Despite vehement protests from old school gamers and programmers, the final decision was made that Rayman, like Mario and Sonic, would make the leap (no pun intended) from sprites to polys. Fortunately, the programmers kept a single goal in mind when making this game: make a 3D game, but keep the gameplay as close to 2D as possible. For a 3D game, Rayman 2 plays remarkably well, compared to the standard 3D platformer fare.



## 

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON











Armorines (Acclaim) — You're part of the toughest combat corps in the galaxy. They're the ugliest scum of the galaxy intent on destruction. This first person shooter looks HOT!

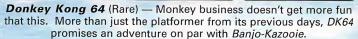






















Earthworm Jim 3D (Take Two) — That super powered worm returns in full 3D vengeance. Guide him through zany levels, and use even zanier weapons. Just watch out for falling cows.









**Starcraft** (Nintendo) — Those PC gamers think they have it made in the real-time strategy. Well, N64 owners will get their chance at this awesome title.









Command & Conquer (Nintendo) — Looking surprisingly almost as good as the PC version, C&C will show N64 owners what they've been missing.





the Electronic Entertainment Exposition (E3), and the lines for the game were so long that I didn't get to play a single match.

My dissatisfaction turned to happiness when the kind folks at Namco came down for an afternoon with the 30% complete E3 version of Soul Calibur. With more than three-fourths of the game yet to be finished, there was a lot we didn't get to see. But even in its early state, Soul Calibur managed to bring all productivity to a screeching halt at GameFan [ed's note: don't worry, that sort of thing happens all the time here]. There wasn't a single staff member that wasn't floored by the beauty of the attract mode demo. Most of the characters that were playable were very faithful to the arcade piece. Though Mitsurugi and lvy were the only ones capable of a 'character versus character' match-up.

Real-time lighting is some of the best we've seen. Multiple sources not only are lit correctly but also don't affect the frame-rate or polygon count whatsoever. Under penalty of death (and a dance in the buff by El Niño), we can't reveal some of the secret characters, but be prepared to greet everyone you saw in the arcade plus some additional surprises.

Soul Calibur supports both the Dreamcast's digital pad and analog thumb stick, and I found the control to be equally responsive with both devices. Juggle combos come out with ease no matter what you choose as a controller. If you want the real thing, your best bet is to pick up one of those heavy duty arcade sticks. Features such as the Parrying and Repel system are in place and work like a charm [ed's note: AGH! Cliché meter going off the charts!]. It's so satisfying to anticipate an attack and counterattack accordingly. The high frame-rate, bolstered with good control, improves

Some sound effects and audio tracks and stages have yet to be placed into the code, but there were enough to get a feel for where the game is headed. through the right speaker setup, the surround sound is chilling. Swords clashing, limbs

breaking... it's all so satisfying. In its previewable state, Soul Calibur is a ways off from being final. Three weeks seems like a long time to wait to get our hands on this monster. The worst is yet to come when we battle it out to see who has first dibs on the home version. I dare say that we'd be happy to have just the unfinished version... and that's with more than half the roster missing in action. Modes like versus and training and the options menu have yet to be finalized.

When heard

We'll hold off on final judgements until we have a reviewable copy that has everything from Soul Edge to Yoshimitsu, down to the pre-rendered character endings. Let me put it this way, unless a group of Japanese Yakuza mobsters gun down the entire Soul Calibur team, it can only get better... and it's not bad to start with. As it stands right now, the game is a major programming achievement and will continue to progress. G





the chances of a successful counterattack.

## A. Intelletiel





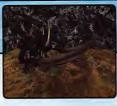




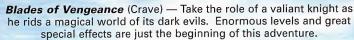




superiority in the video game industry.















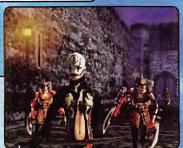


Metropolis Street Racer (Bizarre Creations) — Great special effects coupled with realistic urban street racing makes Metropolis Street Racer a stand out title in its class.









Maken X (Atlus) — As a sentient weapon, possess the minds of different characters and use their unique abilities in this dark adventure featuring twisted 3D worlds.









Frame Gride (From Software) — With spectacular mech design, awesome special effects, and cool hand-to-hand combat, mech lovers watch out for this one.

## 

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

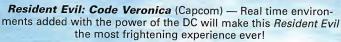








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**Tokyo Xtreme Racer** (Crave) — Awesome lighting effects, 100 different parts to modify your car, and a blistering frame rate make this racer one to look out for.











**TrickStyle** (Acclaim) — Hover-board your way through the city as you gain notoriety and money. Daredevil-like tricks and fantastic special effects will make this one a must get.









Wild Metal Country (Take Two) — Take control of your modifiable tank as you bounty hunt the wanted. Internet play makes this a highly anticipated title.









**Street Fighter Alpha 3** (Capcom) — Marvel Vs. Capcom demonstrated the DC's 2D power. So there's little doubt that SFA3 on the DC will be nothing less than arcade perfect.

### EFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORT

The first wave of nd so it begins... Dreamcast sports titles is here and I couldn't be happier. With a logjam of mediocre sports games clogging PlayStation arteries, and little of playable fare, on the N64, the future was beginning to look bleak for sports gamers. Thankfully, as game publishers are pumping out more and more sequel-driven drivel, the virgin Sega console will stand as the most fertile ground for hungry developers to make a mark.

And what a mark they are making. Here it is, just before launch, and there are already half a dozen sports titles - all of which look great. With no EA in there, Visual Concepts, who is the core of Sega Sports, is lookin' to make the biggest splash with (tentative titles). and Midway also has a strong line-up, with and the stellar (boxing has never looked so good!). We mustn't forget or , either.

In the last sports opener, which was 2 months ago (The Man cut the section last issue to make room for E3 coverage!) I complained that my

I'm going back to school!
Even though my BC
dynasty is suckin', I just
keep on playing. Why?
'Cause this game is just so damn fun! Besides,

maybe I'll be able recruit some linemen who actually know how to run block, at the end of my first season. Being able to rush would be nice.

Gh Ch Ph Mh Oh



NCAA Football 2000 PlayStation EA Sports

Ahh, college football at its finest. With all of the bowls (how many are there now? 120?) and the addition of the Heisman Trophy, it's as though I'm involved with the real thing! Finally, an arena where my USC boys can finally beat UCLA (that is, assuming I get good enough to make that happen).

G, C, P, M, O,

fantasy baseball team was sucking. No more. It looks like El Niño's club may take home the top honors, although it is a battle with onetime co-editor, Joe Kidd, for the top slot. He's got no pitching, though, so it looks good for me.

Although only a grim outlook can be seen for PlayStation sports, August does issue in the one bright spot on the yearly horizon: football games. This maintain its issue, two of the best lock horns once again. Will EA's reclaim the crown it once held? spot at the top of the heap, or will remain the

Which college title will reign supreme (and will best overall gridiron title)? Still too early to make any final judgements but... hey, is that over there ...?

Then there's my favorite genre: hockey. Just call me The Rick, cause to me, there's nothing better than a down-and-dirty hockey game; and no company builds a better game that EA. Can steal some of that Note thunder? Can you believe how good Visual Concepts' hockey title looks!? Did I mention we are the only ones with it, too? Can someone please kidnap Hasek the next time he \_El Niño plays the Bruins?

Developer: 989 Studios

Available: Fall Publisher: 989 Studios # of Players: 1-8

et's be honest, last year's GameBreaker wasn't very good. The on-field graphics may have been good, but the messy interface screens and atrocious linemen Al made it virtually unplayable (oh how I remember Bubba's screams of frustration).

Oh, what a difference a year makes. With a spiffy new interface, improved Al and some new features, GameBreaker 2000 has become a title I'm actually looking forward to playing!

While it is still too early to start picking apart the gameplay, there are several areas of improvement that are immediately noticeable. For one, the playcalling screen is much cleaner and easier to understand. Sure, this is just aesthetics, but when you gotta look at the thing after every play, an ugly one would drive you slowly insane. Also improved is the commentary by Keith Jackson. I dare say that GameBreaker 2000 has some of the best commentary of any football sim (far outclassing EA's college title) and it makes a world of difference, when coupled with the beefy on-screen stat updates that pepper every game of GameBreaker.

Like GameDay, GameBreaker 2000 has added their own dynasty mode, allowing you to coach and GM a team through multiple seasons. Also added is the ability to draft the players into NFL GameDay, so EA can no longer say it is the only

"oh, the tonalities

### of Keith Jackson

title with that option.

Of less importance, but still worth mentioning, is the change to the player model. With a higher poly count and more motion-captured moves, the GameBreaker players look and move better. None of this matter if the linemen Al still sucks, but that doesn't seem to play as big of a factor in GameBreaker 2000. From this early version, the gameplay looks to have made some strong strides and having done that, GameBreaker 2000 has become a game to look for.









## AMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS

"Man, do the **BC** Eagles suck...













### **Developer: EA Publisher: EA Sports**

CAA Football 99 was the best 32bit football game of last year. It bested GameDay, Madden and NCAA GameBreaker, making me wonder if there was any reason to ever even play those titles again. Whatever the aspect, NCAA Football was better. I logged so many hours, in Dynasty Mode, my friends thought I had blown a gasket. Quite honestly, it was the only football title I was truly enthusiastic about, going into this season.

Unfortunately, this is the first reviewable football game I

"This is the

game to beat, and it will be

tough.

have seen this year, so I can't crown it king...yet. I say yet because NCAA Football 2000 is even better than last year's, and most sports franchises evolve more slowly than West Virginians.

It's all in there; everything that made the '99 version shine is back... and in some cases better. Case in point: the Dynasty Mode. The feature that made last year's version the most engrossing sim out there just got deeper. Now, not only can you guide any one of your favorite teams through four seasons, you can create your own colleges and teams to add to the current NCAA Division I conferences. Choose the size of the school, style of stadium and team colors and name. Purists won't want to meddle too much with this, but think of the multi-player dynasty seasons you can create with

Also, the recruiting mode has gotten

**Available: August** # of Players: 1-8



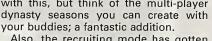
more intricate. Last year's recruiting was a simplistic exercise requiring you to only send out the head coach in order to secure some blue chip players. This time around, recruiting takes place over five weeks and is broken down into wooing players which hail only from certain states that you have access to (depending on the size of your school and your football program). In other words, if you are a small school with an average team located in Maryland, don't expect to have access to players in

Oregon. Only the Nebraskas and FSUs have that kinda reach. Players will complain that they want to stay close to home or play for a contender, so it will be up to you to

work on them over the five weeks and even then it isn't a definite.

The other improvements can be seen in the graphics. New player models make for a prettier gaming experience and the addition of over 100 new animations add to the realism (there are some great running back collision moves). There are also more teams (220 now), more plays and all of the bowl games. EA has also licensed the Heisman Trophy, so expect to see it in the year-end awards ceremony.

This is the game to beat, and it will be tough. The same fantastic gameplay coupled with better graphics and a deeper Dynasty Mode make for a very enjoyable football experience. A must have.







## SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS





Developer: Midway Publisher: Midway

Available: Now # of Players: 1-4

"All real Americans love the

sting of battle. -Gen. G.S. Patton

ost foreigners dismiss our obsession with football as a sign of our aggressive American tendencies. Every Sunday your girlfriend probably condemns it as barbaric (and then pouts as you tell her to get out of the way of the TV). I can only imagine what these nay-sayers think of a game like this. NFL Blitz is all about on-field violence; merciless pummeling at the hands of 300-pound, steroid-pumped, wrecking machines. It's everything a fourteenyear old boy could ever want.

Blitz is too much game to be contained on any one system, so Midway has planned the release on all three platforms. Obviously, the PlayStation version will have the most difficulty capturing the essence that is the coin-op, but it is clear, from this alpha, that it will be impressive, nonetheless.

Blitz, for the uninitiated (if there still are any), is a 7-on-7 football war with no refs and no penalties. You get four downs to get 30 yards and running plays are not part of the game plan. Excess is everything, so the hits are big, the money plays bigger, and late hits and smack talk are encouraged. This is pure arcade action, so simheads need not apply.

To this point, the game looks to be a solid reproduction, although the frame rate is lower, and the players move a bit slower. Gameplay, which is Blitz's strongest point, remains intact. The option to create your own plays is still included, as well as a Tournament Mode and Season Mode. All of the arcade codes will work on the home version.

For arcade action, NFL Blitz 2000 will deliver. For those of you who won't have the option to play this title on the N64 or Dreamcast, you can still expect a whoppin' good time. EN











Developer: 989 Studios Publisher: 989 Studios # of Players: 1-8

Available: Fall

ast year 989 Studios decided to try and wrestle away some of Midway's Blitz audience with NFL \*Xtreme. While the game was entertaining, it offered just more of the same and, frankly, didn't do it as well as its opposition. It's another year and 989 has been feverishly at work making Xtreme 2 a bigger, badder behemoth of a football title.

It looks like developers are on the right track. Xtreme 2 can boast faster gameplay, better graphics and more of the stuff we love: bone-crunching hits and abusive trash talk. This 5-on-5 melee has the added bonus of thicker playbooks and the Cleveland Browns. It's true, the Brown are back and I couldn't be happier; bring the Dawg Pound to the field, baby!

Don't expect the gameplay to have changed much. The mechanics of the game remain intact, although attention is being paid to toning down the money plays. The action remains fast and open, although the use of only five players hinders as much as it helps. That shouldn't come as a surprise.

The fact remains that you are either an Xtreme man or a Blitz man. Don't expect enough of a change over last year's version to warrant a conversion on the part of either game. Just know that you will still have a choice when it comes to arcade football barbarism. The American way. EN

...see your enemies

driven before you...











## AMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS







an you smell it? It hangs in the air like some sweet, familiar scent. Can you feel it? That same air is crackling with electricity. Set up your fantasy teams, kiss your girlfriend goodbye (assuming you still have one after last season), and brush off the recliner; the next two dozen weeks belong to Howie, Madden, Terry, and Brown. Football is back, and with it, the newest GameDay title.





Developer: 989 Studios Publisher: 989 Studios # of Players: 1-8

Every year developers say they are "taking the game to the next level." Well, most of that is just lame hyperbole, but at least you can count on enough improvements to warrant another look. 989 Studios has been hard at work making their popular pigskin title even better.

Every aspect of the game has been given a tune-up. For starters, you will notice new player models and motion capture. The Browns are back, the Oilers are now the Titans and a free-floating camera will allow you to view the game from any vantage point. The additions of nuances, such as cut blocks and more player-specific moves will make for a more realistic and hopefully more enjoyable game.

Not only is imitation the sincerest form of flattery, it is an absolutely necessity in the video game world. 989 Studios knows this and has acted accordingly. Last year, the battle of the best pro football sim went to EA's Madden because it had two things that GameDay did not: a dynasty mode and the ability to carry over the college players (from NCAA Football 99) into the NFL draft. Both were brilliant additions, which made for much deeper gameplay. This year, GameDay 2000 will also include those features, making it a much more dynamic game.

Many other small additions will also make for a better game, such as deeper stats, custom playbooks, the ability to make custom plays, all past Super Bowl teams, and a GM mode. When coupled with GameDay's impressive game engine and playability, this should make for one super sim.













Developer: EA Publisher: EA Sports

Available: Sept. # of Players: 1-8 N SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS FAMFFAN S

The granddaddy of football sims is entering its umpteenth season and hopefully has the stuff needed to make the newest installment worth getting excited about (something that is getting more and more difficult in the 32-bit sports world). Like GameDay, work has been done on the player models, scaling them accordingly to the size they are, in proportion, with the others on the field. Linemen are bigger, safeties are smaller and Randy Moss is just damn tall.

Since franchise mode was already in last year's version, all that could be done with it was to make it more in-depth. It has. There are more stat records, the ability to have more users and a better draft. Very nice.

More improvement has been done on the commentary, making it easier on the ear and helping with overall ambiance; ambiance is always good.

What worried me about Madden 99, though, is still a question mark for 2000: How does the game play? While still a solid game, I thought that Madden 99 had lost a step in that department, relinquishing its place at the top of the football pile to little brother, NCAA Football 99. The running game is what needed to be addressed. Let's hope it was. Let's face it, all the features in the world won't make gamers forget about that.

Madden 2000 will also be available on the Nintendo 64.

## GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORT

"I'd like you to

meet the new kings

of the football sim"

"It is imperative that vou buy this machine..



Developer: Visual Concepts Available: Sep. 9th Publisher: Sega

# of Players: 1-4



ike a set of Promethean shackles, my jaded gamer status had dragged me down; made me listless and, dare l say, threatened to turn me off from all sort of sports fare. Jubilation! The shackles have been broken and I can once again froth rabidly over a new sports title. I haven't been this excited for a sports title since the anticipation over

NHL 94 had me climbing the walls of my frat house [Go Chi Psi!].

Visual Concepts, who made a lessthan-stellar impact with such (highly

THE SECOND STREET

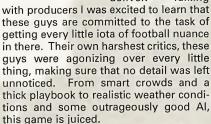
underrated) titles as One and NBA Fastbreak '98, have exploded onto the Dreamcast scene with what is arguably the best sports title ever, and the crown jewel in the Dreamcast's US launch. NFL 2000 works the type of gaming magic I didn't even think was possible. It's about



time these wizards got their just due.

Graphics: You can't talk about this title without first mentioning the graphics. Looking at NFL 2000 you'd think the Lord himself had a hand in the creation of the visuals; simply gorgeous. A laborious mo-cap schedule produced over 1,700 individual moves! At a quick glance, this game looks and moves like the real thing.

All Dreamcast games look great, though, and it isn't graphics that gamers are seeking; it's gameplay. NFL 2000 is sure to **Talking** deliver.



While it would be impossible to go through everything that is planned for, or already in, NFL 2000, I will just say that it will completely change your perceptions of, and expectations for, sports games to come. I'll dangle multiple contact points, perfect physics and dead-on collision detection in front of you, for teasers. When you see these things in action, you'll know why I'm so damn excited - and why it is imperative that you buy this machine. EN















## AMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS

## Sega NBA 2000

"...the tru basketball fan's dream game..."













### Developer: Visual Concepts Publisher: Sega

p until now, there has only been one true basketball sim: NBA Live. ShootOut and In the Zone have made attempts at besting the EA juggernaut, but to no avail. EA is opting not to enter the Dreamcast fray, so there will be no Live for Sega's new machine. Looking at this title, though, I don't think it will really matter. NBA 2000 will reshape the basketball genre

basketball genre much like its sister opus, NFL 2000, will reshape the football genre.

NBA 2000 has fallen a bit behind NFL

2000 in production, so don't expect it to make the September launch — they have no intention of rushing this game to stores. This may not be such a bad thing, though, because developers are intent on trying to get all of the rookies in, as well as making sure the rosters are correct (and the team names; we wouldn't want any Atlanta Magics floating around in the game, now would we?). The motion capture is taking a bit longer, too, and there are still many areas that need to be tweaked. Everything from rebounding and loose ball Al to the perfect foul-shot meter is being gone over.

This will be the true basketball fan's dream game... when it's done. No facet of the game is being left out; no area of play beneath scrutiny. Crowds will leave if the game turns into a blow-out; animations can be stopped mid-stream, to facilitate responsive gameplay (super cancels, anyone?); every type of pass,

Available: 4th Qtr. # of Players: 1-4

Preview

shot and dunk will be available with which to dazzle the audience; each arena is a perfect facsimile of the real thing, all the way down to the rafters and seating arrangements.

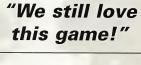
As I sat playing NBA 2000, I couldn't believe how solid the gameplay was. If I didn't know any better (and couldn't see), I'd have thought it was 16-bit, the

way the players responded and how tight the control was; pure, blissful g a m e p l a y. Currently there are still some problems

with certain moves and player Al, but rest assured, all will be fixed.

One of the absolute coolest extras is the commentary. It wasn't in the burn I played, but there will be a five-man commentary team. That's right, five, including a floor reporter (like Cheryl Miller, on NBC). If the sound quality is anywhere near as sweet as the visuals, then this commentary will blow the doors off that in Triple Play, NHL 99 or Live 99 — considered the best of the bunch (not to compare PSX to Dreamcast, but it's the only point of reference I've got, so back off).

Like I said in the NFL 2000 preview, there is so much going on in this game — so many things you'll never see, that will be in there — that I can't possibly fit them onto a page. Just be satisfied, in the knowledge, that Visual Concepts is working overtime to make this the quintessential hoops sim. Just wait until their hockey sim is finished... EN







## GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORT

## Seia Mal 2000

TENTATIVETITLE

"...Hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey...



Developer: Black Box Available: 1st Qtr. 2000 Publisher: Sega # of Players: 1-4



hey jumped us... called us names...but Dave was there."
"Dave's a killer!" "Dave's a mess..."
Immortal lines preceding five of the funniest minutes in film history... to hockey fans. No, Black Box will not be bringing any Slapshot elements to Sega Hockey, but it seemed appropriate to start off the preview to what looks to be the best hockey game ever, with some lines from one of the best [hockey] comedies of all time.

This game is quite a ways off, folks, so I don't have much to offer beyond these tantalizing screenshots. The third game in VC's growing library of impressive 128-bit titles, Sega Hockey (obviously they can't call it NHL 2000, with EA already owning that name) looks like another triumphant sport sim. So, while we are scooping the competition with this preview, I am at a loss as to what I can tell you, other than the tape we saw of this game running gives me goosebumps.

So here it goes... an open letter to the developers. For this to be the greatest hockey game ever, there are certain areas that must be addressed. Feel free to use any of my ideas, as long as I get royalties and a chance to drive a Zamboni.

Obviously gameplay and Al are paramount. If you don't have these two, you don't have a game, so I will refrain from yammering on about them. What I want is realism and features. You're working with the Dreamcast, so those players better look and move like the real thing. On top of that, I want to see actual player faces, coaches, and refs. I want to see The Devil's (a.k.a. Don Koharski's) face on that striped body as well as Claude Lemieux's

lecherous mug as he cheap-shots yet another unsuspecting player.

Give me a reason to play for The Cup. At the end of a successful bid, enable players to carve [type] their name into it, and have it include the team they did it with, as well as the record. Or maybe unlock Hall of Famers like Orr, Shore, and Howe. Goalies with no helmets, anyone?

I also want to see a beefy career mode with more stats than I know what to do with. The create-a-player must be deep and the ability to GM should be very intricate. I should also state that I want to see User Records that include things like "most goals ever scored in a game," "most penalty minutes," etc...

Speaking of penalties, I want fights — but not the type of useless fighting that hinders other games. I want fighting to happen for a reason and I want it to have repercussions. Allow players to crowd goalies and hit them. Make that the catalyst for a brawl. Give out suspensions and up the chances for an injury. If Domi or Probert has a hold of some cupcake, that quy should be going off ice, on a stretcher.

Make sure there are empty teams slots so people can create their own teams — and make sure you can set up mini-schedules for a smaller number of teams, so you can play through stat-tracked season's with only a couple of guys. This would be big on the fraternity house circuit.

O.K., the rant's over, but I hope Black Box gets the picture. It isn't just about the way the game plays — it's about catering to the way fans want to play the game. Forget the juicy options and you can forget about ever outclassing EA (and winning my heart). EN















### AMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS GAMEFAN SPORTS



othin' better than a hockey sim, and there's no hockey sim quite like NHL. While we all harken back to the classic NHL 94, citing its unbelievable gameplay that only 16-bit could deliver, there is no doubt that the 32-bit installments have been nearing ever closer to that level of perfection.

There was many a nay-sayer last year, though — something which completely baffled me. People complained that the game played too slow and had a low frame-rate.



Please... the game rocked. This year's installment is even better than last. The tempo is faster, the play is a tad tighter, and the frame-rate has been boosted. Also, new play elements have been added to generate more game depth, such as a "Big Hit" button as well as a new deke feature.

Developer: EA

Publisher: EA Canada

One of the game's strongest elements remains the commentary. While play-by-play is still called by Jim Hughson, the color has been taken over by Bill Clement (bummer, I liked that other guy). One of the game's weakest elements, the fighting, remains anemic. It has a new interface, allowing for more pugilism, but don't expect it to be anything more than a distraction. EA needs to find a way to make it more instrumental.

The PlayStation version won't have that face-scan ability of the PC version (something that could be really cool for create-a-player), but it does have career mode and a fantasy draft, and that's all that matters. The career mode will implement a system that alters player's abilities as they age, making the game more realistic. As you get older, you'll lose a step, but maybe increase your offensive and defensive awareness. Free agency will also play a part.

Next to my Kings season tickets, this may be the one thing I look forward to the most this hockey season. EN

## NIIL Faceoff 2000

### "Droppin"

### the gloves..."

've made it no secret that I prefer NHL to FaceOff. I've also made no secret my obsession with hockey, which keeps me hungering for something new. For years I've watched the FaceOff franchise grow, and while it only bested NHL one year ('96), it has always remained a solid hockey sim.

Unlike NHL 2000, FaceOff 2000 is still far from complete and many of the proposed features and improvements have yet to find their way into the game. For one, there will be the option to create and manage your



own team — from player drafts and free agency signings to custom offensive and defensive play settings and create-a-player. Not exactly a career mode, but it'll do.

The game will also contain a two-man commentary booth, utilizing the talents of Mike Emrick and Darren Pang. Dynamic cameras will also be included to maintain that look and feel of a real hockey telecast.

FaceOff 2000 is boasting the first ever on-ice motion captured moves. The purpose of this is to generate smoother, more realistic player animation, showcasing more of the nuances of hockey. FaceOff has always been a good-looking game, so I expect this to look great.

Then there's the I.C.E. AI<sup>TM</sup>, or Intelligence Comprehension Execution Artificial Intelligence (don't these terms seem to get longer every year?). This verbose term is supposed to signify some intelligent and comprehensive player execution... Hey, wait a minute... Look for these guys to play the puck and the man just like the pros do!

My constant beef with FaceOff (and ultimately the reason for my relegating it to second) has been its gameplay. Not tight enough for me, but whether that gets fixed remains to be seen. We'll just have to wait and see. **EN** 



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Available: Fall

# of Players: 1-8

## Samurai Shodown 2

For those that don't know, I, Dangohead, am the biggest Samurai Shodown fan here at GF. I would also like to say that I'm the best Samurai Shodown player around... though, being a nice guy, I won't say such things [ed's note: nyuk, nyuk...]. And while Samurai Shodown for the Neo Geo Pocket was nice, Samurai Shodown 2 for the Neo Geo Pocket Color blows away the original (in the same way Samurai Shodown 2 was way better than the first one in the arcades).

Fourteen characters make up the lineup of this excellent fighter, including three fighters from Samurai Shodown 64 II <shudder>. Featuring gameplay elements from Samurai Shodown 4 (the Bust and Slash modes, the combo system, etc.) and combining the speed and gameplay that made Samurai Shodown 2 the best of the series (oh yes, definitely the best), this game should be more than enough for any Samurai Shodown fan. But SNK truly loves you and has included a card collection system. Meet certain requirements when playing a game (like defeating an opponent with a Super Move), and you'll get a card which can add offensive and defensive attributes to your stats, as well as new special moves!

There is no doubt that Samurai Shodown 2 is the best fighting game on the NGPC, and I personally think it's the best game so far for SNK's wondrous handheld. Samurai Shodown fans have been waiting for a SS game on par with Samurai Shodown 2 in the arcades, and now, they have it in the palm of their hands.















DEVELOPER - SNK	1-2 PLAYERS	VIEWPOINT . Q3
DUDUICHED - SNK	AVAILABLE : NOW	Score • 7 J

## Fatal Fury - First Contact

If there's one thing that SNK has an abundance of, it's fighting games. Sure, once in a while they may miss a step in their stride (<cough> Samurai Shodown 64 <cough>), but in general, I always expect great fighting action with SNK. So it's not surprising that Fatal Fury: First Contact for the Neo Geo Color Pocket plays as it is expected to; great control, nice graphics, and cool original features.

Eleven characters (two brand, spanking, new ones), all with their own personalized moves, comprise the lineup, and every gamer will find one character which will fit them like a well-worn baseball mitt. And to keep up with the evolution of Fatal Fury, FF:FC combines the latest features of Fatal Fury (Break Shot, the H-S-P Power Meter, Evasion Attack) and adds two new features. First, you can now twist while jumping in the air, allowing you to escape attacks that would normally hit you out of the air. And when knocked down, use the Technical Rise to attack nearby opponents while getting up.

Good graphics and control, and the tried-and-true fighting formula of Fatal Fury make Fatal Fury: First Contact a great fighting game to have on the Neo Geo Pocket Color. While it might not be quite as good as Samurai Shodown 2 on NGPC, Fatal Fury fans will not be disappointed.















DEVELOPER - SNK	1-2 PLAYERS	VIEWPOINT 87
PUBLISHER - SNK	AVAILABLE: NOW	Score •













## Metal Slug - First Mission

While there is some argument over who invented the side-scrolling action shooter genre (some say *Contra*, some say *Rush N' Attack*, and so on and so forth), there's little doubt that near the top of the totem pole, you'll find the *Metal Slug* series. Renowned for its excellent action, cool power-ups, fantastic animation, and wonderful personality, *Metal Slug* has always been popular in arcades. And now, SNK brings the arcade shooting-fest home to the Neo Geo Pocket Color.

Featuring 16 different missions, *Metal Slug: First Mission* plays pretty much like its arcade sibling, with a few gameplay changes. First off, the option button is used to toggle when you're using grenades or gun. This is a bit annoying at first, but it's not a tremendous handicap. The levels are much more intricate, in that, instead of pure linear action, you now can explore too. The music is a bit... archaic, and pales to the drumming marches of the arcade version. Lastly, there is no two-player mode in this game, but as ECM would say, "It's me against the world anyway!" (in that deranged, high-pitched voice of his).

All in all, Metal Slug: First Mission is a great action title for the Neo Geo Pocket Color. Great control, nice graphics, and the trademark Metal Slug personality — if you own a Neo Geo Pocket Color it would be a sin not to get this great game.

VIEWPOINT:90

DEVELOPER - SNK 1 PLAYER

PUBLISHER - SNK AVAILABLE: NOW















### Crush Roller

In the video game industry, there are a lot of ways to sell a title. Making the game a graphical feast to catch the eye is always popular. And then there's that wonderful tool we call marketing... But the best is to make a great game which plays well, is super addictive, and which simply sells itself through word of mouth. Such is the case with *Crush Roller* for the Neo Geo Pocket Color.

The gameplay is relatively simple. You are a paintbrush. Your job is to paint every nook and cranny of a neighborhood road. The obstacles? Cute, vicious monsters that chase you to the bitter end and pesky "irksters" who leave footprints on your painted path. Your weapons? A roller that allows you to "crush" the tadpole baddies (even though they return moving even faster). Playing very much like Pac-Man, the latter levels get pretty hard, and you'll find yourself crying whenever one of the enemies catches you. And there's nothing more frustrating than having to repaint a part of the road where Irksters have left their footprints. If it sounds like it's addicting, it is. If it sounds like Crush Roller is fun, it most definitely is. And if it sounds like you have to buy this game now, before finishing this review, you'd better go buy it NOW!

VIEWPOINT :89

DEVELOPER - ADK
PUBLISHER - SNK

1-2 PLAYERS
AVAILABLE: NOW



# Japan Now.

've been spouting the glories of this game for months now. It has been #1 in my Top Ten for the past year, dropping only once to the #2 spot. In my mind, it is the perfect arcade game for the hardcore arcade gamer. And now, with Internet head-to-head play planned, *Virtual On Oratorio Tangram* is coming to a Dreamcast this year.

While *VOOT* is nearly non-existent in the US (six machines are scattered throughout the US)

are scattered throughout the US, two of them unconfirmed), the game is still among the top arcade games in Japan. Similar to the first *Virtual On*, this one-on-one mech combat game outdoes the original by a landslide with added features(air dashing and virtual armor), new characters (like scythe-wielding Specineff and dragonsummoning Angelan), wonderful special effects, and

elegantly complex gameplay.

Some say that this Model 3 Step 2 powerhouse would lose a lot of its visual splendor if Sega attempted a translation onto the Dreamcast. Well, after seeing the following exclusive screenshots of the DC version of VOOT that is still not complete, I have complete faith in Sega that the arcade port of this phenomenal game will be flawless (and trust me, I've played the arcade version to death).

played the arcade version to death).

As far as the online multi-player mode,
Sega of Japan has revealed two modes of
play that will be accessible online. First
will be "Easy User" mode, which is the
equivalent of a "pick up game" type style.
The fights in Easy User mode are set for a
time limit of 80 seconds, and best of three
round wins. The other mode is "Heavy
User" mode, designed for hardcore VOOT players (like yours truly).
This mode enables an Options setting (for time limit and number of
rounds), Stage Select, an Internet chat option, and a ranking system
where you can compete in. This ranking system option comes with
an up-to-date listing of the best players online.

There is no set date for release of VOOT on Dreamcast, other than
"near the end of this year." But if you have a import Dreamcast
and you're looking for what is possibly the greatest arcade game
translation, the wait for Virtual On Oratorio Tangram for the
Dreamcast doesn't seem too long at all.

Dangchead















n his nearly 20-year career, Mario's seemingly done it all. While the rest of us go about our typically mundane lives, Mario has (in no particular order): saved the world on no less than eight separate occasions (count 'em all!); refereed tennis matches; raced nitro-powered gokarts; earned a degree in medicine; gone on a journey through time (with Luigi on his tail); become heavyweight champ of the Nintendo universe; and even found time to teach some typing! Now things have finally come nearly full circle apparently Mario and co. have finally found some time to rest between saving the world, and what better way to while away those days than a nice

round of golf? Why it's been years since Mario's last outing on the sticks, with the halcyon days of NES Golf now but a dim, faded memory and the Visine-deprived world of VB Golf not counting for much. This time out, Software Camelot Planning has seen fit (under the big N's considerable auspices) to bring their much-heralded Hot Shots Golf to the N64 under the new name of (über-creativity time) Mario Golf.

So what exactly does that mean? Well, quite simply, it means that the developer of such games as Beyond the Beyond (shudder with me) and Shining Force 3 has brought their biggest hit ever to the house that Mario built. Best yet, it's probably the number one sports game available on the N64 (All-Star Baseball who?!). But that's reviewtalk - for the time being you're going to have to sate your hunger on this brief preview and get ready for the blow-out (based on the domestic rev) coming next month (yes, that's right, ECM will write a sports review next month... the Four Horsemen shouldn't be far behind).

Essentially if you've played the remarkable Hot Shots, you've played Mario Golf... with the standard Nintendo twist. Hit the links with Mario, Luigi (yep, the has-been is onboard), Peach (the Princess to us 'old school' gamers), Bowser, etc. for a day, on one of three courses (including some mini-golf!). Prepare to unlock all manner of 'hidden' characters as well as lose your life to, well... golf (yeah, I know, I can't believe it either).

For now, feast your eyes on a bevy of new screens and prepare yourself for what may prove to be the best game I've yet played this year - I can hear Eggo calling the sanitarium right now. Till next month, I'll be hitting Mushroom Beach for a little R&R, Mario-style! ECM



ECM: IT'S-A DEVELOPER - CAMELOT 1-4 PLAYERS

PRIVIEW ME... ECM! PUBLISHER - NINTENDO AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN

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here are a lot of import games that don't make it to the U.S... and for good reason. Those who think every Japanese game should be ported to the U.S. should play the likes of Cooking Fighter, Dance! Dance! Dance!, and Seaman (hmm, now there's a concept... a talking fish game). Still, there are a few gems that, for some reason or another, never made it over here... and the Super Robot Wars series is one of them. Influenced by watching cool robot anime ever since I was a wee dango, I realize Super Robot Wars may not be the deepest strategy game out there, but it certainly wins points for style, fun, and the all-important reminiscing factor. Ahh, the young days of afterschool Tranzor Z (AKA Mazinger Z)... And after countless titles, Banpresto comes out with another jewel of a Super Robot Wars title on the PSX. And while I don't like the PS versions of Super Robots Wars, there is so much stuff in Super Robot Wars Complete Box, that any fan of the SRW series MUST get this title.

Gameplay-wise, SRW Complete Box holds revamped versions of Super Robot Wars 2 (SFC), Super Robot Wars 3 (SFC), and Super Robot Wars EX (SFC). The story and gameplay remain true to the original versions, but the graphics are on par with the most recent SRW -Super Robot Wars F Complete. Sure, the three-frames-at-most animation is far from jaw-dropping, but the point of SRW is not the graphics, but the novelty of being able to play Mazinger Z, Getta Robo, Zeta Gundam, and other legendary robots of anime lore. Gameplay remains in its original form: turn-based combat, which has changed very little since the first Super Robot Wars (nearly 10 years ago). This tried-and-true formula guarantees that only the hard-core SRW fans will own this game. And to make it more tantalizing, Super Robot

th 279/2000 E on 1179/2800

# **SUPER ROBOT WARS COMPLETE BOX**



Wars CB comes with so many extras, even non-SRW fans might take up this title.

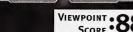
Besides renewed versions of the three Super Robot Wars games, SRWCB contains all the original soundtrack music, which consists of all the themes of each anime robot. A full history, as well as an entire pilot background roundup from all three SRW games is also listed for your reading pleasure. A custom battle mode allows you to choose any robots (including enemy robots) from the three SRW games and do battle with either a CPU team of robots, or a second human opponent! Finally, there are some nice CG movies that, while not on par with anything from

Namco or Square, have a nice style of their own. Basically what it comes down to is this: if you're not a SRW fan at all, just take a look at this game. But if you're one of those kids who still remembers when Mazinger Z fired his "Breast Fire," you have got to get Super Robot Wars Complete Box.











amco's Ace Combat has been the single most popular flight simulation/arcade series since the PlayStation's inception. Admittedly, the PlayStation hasn't seen many games in this genre; and the likes of Agile Warrior and Warhawk never matched the quality of Ace Combat. Now, Ace Combat 3 has all the markings of a solid aerial fighter — as it should, because two years is more than enough time to design a fitting sequel.

Whereas the first two games in this series, Air Combat and Ace Combat 2, had only real warplanes (with the possible exception of the XFA-27), AC3 features the old planes we're used to and fictional ones. As out of/place as it may seem, there is a story here as well. Between the soap opera and the Namcoinvented aircraft, this chapter in the Ace Combat saga resembles an episode of Robotech more than anything else... sans Veritechs, of course.

But those aren't the only changes in AC3; everything from the heads-up display to the terrain is much improved. Gone is that ugly HUD from AC2 which looks circa 1980. In is a new free-roaming view function. By moving the right analog stick in



any direction, you can see what is going on in that area of the playfield. Plus, pressing the button down gives a rear view perfect for when a missile is about to connect. This new feature adds an unheard of depth to dogfights and aerial strikes. A total of 20 fighters are available to fly in over 50 missions. The operations assigned depend on which difficulty you select and the path you choose when given multiple choices. Branching increases the longevity of the game, particularly if you plan on playing through every mission.

The gameplay is Ace Combat through and through... Tailing a stealth bomber in a narrow canyon at supersonic speeds gives you an exhilarating sense of speed. Mission upon mission, the pace escalates from standard fare to hellish proportions.

Surprisingly, the tuneage is completely different Hard rockin' tunes have now been from AC2. replaced with trendy electronica. And while AC3's music isn't bad, I prefer blasting MIGs to the sound of guitars, not synthesizers.

I'm not a huge fan of flight simulators; but Ace Combat is the exception to this rule. The locales are breathtaking and the warplane models are authentic down to the ailerons and flaps. I only have two gripes with the game: The vanishing point and depth-cueing, while taxing the PlayStation to its limits, are still not perfect. Simultaneously pitching and rolling simply aren't responsive enough. Minor flaws aside, this title re-affirms Namco's PlayStation programming skills. Whether Ace Combat 3 is a purchase or import rental depends entirely on you. As for me, I'll be playing this puppy for a long time to come.

Cerberus gets carsick while commuting from Orange County on a daily basis and has never actually flown.

under construction

CERBERUS: TARGET WWW.GAMEFAN.COM

DEVELOPER - NAMCO 1 PLAYER ACQUIRED: BULL'S EYE! PUBLISHER - NAMCO AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN

VIEWPOINT 8

# ELEMENTAL e all know someone like E.G.G. — someone that was pushed through high school (and

probably college) despite the misgivings of teachers, parents, friends, pets, etc.; somebody that never should have escaped the tenth grade (hopelessly mired somewhere between American history and algebra). That's Elemental Gimmick Gear in an eggshell, the latest DC game from Hudson that 'graduated' from Saturn development

under less-than-auspicious circumstances.

So let's say you're a console developer that's sunk a sizable amount of development time and money into a project only to see its target platform go up in a puff of smoke; in this case, Saturn. It's happened countless times in the history of console gaming; hell, there's a whole library of 32X games that never saw the light of day outside Sega of America (what I wouldn't do for a copy of Virtua Hamster, X-Men or Mud Kicker <sigh>). On occasion, however, taking a game that might have been pretty cool on one platform and 'upgrading' it for another is not always the best move — sorta like taking a classic B&W film (*Psycho* for instance) and upgrading it for 'today's audiences' (the same people that enjoy 'classics' like The Waterboy - Adam Sandler: misunderstood comic genius or borderline retarded?).

The title refers to a clockwork-style robotic defender of the world that is out to right the wrongs that humanity has inflicted on the virgin earth. OK, that's a bit of an oversimplification but it'll suffice. Taking the role of Leon, the pilot of one of these E.G.G.s (perhaps even the original E.G.G.) he's out on a quest to save the environment and discover his true identity. Gameplay is somewhat enjoyable as you trek around adding new 'gimmicks' to your 'gear, but it gets monotonous very quickly.

Graphically speaking, the game features very nicely handdrawn locales for the various characters to interact with; it's easily the best part of the game. The characters them-selves are, <sigh>, rendered sprites with not nearly enough animation - get ready for lots of the twoframe shuffle, I'm afraid. In fact, it looks as if the game would fit quite easily on a PlayStation given

its limited frame rate (sadly for the DC, Saga Frontier 2 and Legend of Mana are better looking games). The only aspect that even scratches the surface of the DC is the certain battle sequences against major characters that take place in 3D arenas. While they're clean and move at a

decent clip, it's certainly nothing to get really worked up over.

F.U.ISI comes down to it, E.G.G. fits firmly in the mold of a game that should have stayed in Saturn limbo, or worst case, been shifted over to PlayStation to languish with a legion of other sub-par titles — there's no need to pollute a console in dire need of killer apps with something as rotten as this egg. Save your bucks. After all, Climax Landers is right around the corner... **ECM** 

When it all

ECM often wonders what would happen if he put this E.G.G. in the microwave.

Score •

DEVELOPER - HUDSON 1 PLAYER PUBLISHER - HUDSON | AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN | ARE RUNNY...

ECM: My E.G.G.s

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For those of you that never experienced the likes of Double Dragon, Final Fight or any of its various ilk, DD2 is a must-play. For those of you that yearn for a time when simpler, more kinetic games were the rule and not the exception,

this game is a must play. For those of you so horrifically jaded over the past three or four years, this game is a must play — just to remind you that a game doesn't have to be monumentally deep, feature a shotgun-toting superhero, or play host to some cute little abomination as he spreads good cheer and joy across a world of pastels and floating platforms. Nope, this game is all about how quickly you can send the nearest miscreant to an unhappy, fracture-filled end.

#### Extra! Extra! Bleed all about it!

So what does Dynamite Deka 2 offer beyond the standard missions? Let's just say that this game has been completely Namco'ed. "Namco'ed?!" you ask, "what's that?" It's when a company takes a game that originated in the arcade and adds all manner of bells, whistles and enhancements to extend replayability and increase the hard-working gamer's bang-for-a-buck. And herein Sega went way over and above the call of duty.

For starters, as is pretty much standard issue these days (thanks again, Namco), there's the inclusion of all-new rendered cut-scenes that were never a part of the Model 2C original. Only problem with little 'bonuses' like this is that if you're going to go down this path, it'd be nice to see some effort put into them. See, DD2DC (whoa!) is home to some of the most broken renders you're ever likely to lay eyes on.

In fact, the little girl you wind up rescuing at the end of each of the initial 3 missions is so heinous looking that you're wont to wonder why exactly the Dynamite Cops are risking life and limb to save such a troglodyte (here comes the hate mail). Letting Hiroyuki, the janitor at Sega of Japan, do your renders on off-hours probably wasn't the best move.

It's not all bleak, though, as Sega also included a set of all-new gameplay modes to make sure they squeeze every ounce of play outta the original. After completing the first 3 missions, you'll unlock missions 4-6, each of which, while they're exactly the same graphically, offers a different play mode. For example, mission 4 is a one-man battle through the entire first mission — sans continues and extra lives.

These are just a sampling of the little 'extras' that go a long way to show that Sega is willing to put in a little extra effort to make their games more of a 'must-have' than they would otherwise be.

ECM spends long hours tormenting his underlings, quickly calling "All editorial staff to the conference room" when one of his myriad of action figures is even a millimeter out of place.

# DUARTER RUNCHERS SILLERS

Street Fighter has been and continues to be the longest running fighting game franchise. This statement holds even more truth if the original

Street Fighter, released in 1987, is jumbled in with its many, many sequels. It took Capcom four long years to develop a second chapter (Street Fighter II) in the Street Fighter series. And it was another six years until Street Fighter III landed in arcades across the nation. Capcom released a multitude of Street Fighter-derived games in the interim. These include Champion Edition, Super Street Fighter II, Street Fighter: The Movie, the EX series, the Alpha series and, to a lesser degree, the Vs. series. Suffice it to say SF has had a very respectable career.

Released in spring of '97, Street Fighter III hit arcades with much anticipation. As popular as it was, SFIII still felt some heat from detractors. Players whined about unfair parrying, high-damage combos, and Oro's Tengu Stone, among other things. Some of the flaws in SFIII were alleviated in Street Fighter III: Second Impact. This new installment segregated the twins, Yun and Yang, and added two new characters Hugo, from the Final Fight universe, and Urien. Akuma also was a playable fighter. Even in its new state the game was still not perfect. More than a year later, Capcom issues yet another upgrade, Street Fighter III: Third Strike.

Third time's the charm, or so it goes... this being the third installment of *Street Fighter Three. SFIII: Third Strike* introduces four new characters: Remy, a french Guile clone; Q, a masked man with a trench coat; Twelve, an amorphous Russian experiment; and Makoto, a Japanese female judo master. Only rumored to have been in *Second Impact*, Chun Li

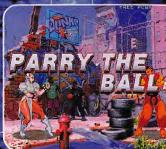
finally makes her

debut in *Third Strike*. Q and Twelve are the least exciting of the new challengers. Makoto and Remy are very charming characters, and I'm sure they'll be very popular. Chun Li is totally new; and even though very few of her attacks have been carried over from previous games, she's as effective as ever.

Turtle (tur't'l) n., 1. any of a large and widely distributed order of land, freshwater, and saltwater reptiles having a toothless beak and a soft body encased in a hard shell. 2. A person who plays fighting games (particularly *Street Fighter*) with defensive, reaction-based tactics.

The Parry system makes *SFIII* a turtle-fest. It's not uncommon for opposing players to jump in and not attack anticipating that you'll attack. When, and if you do attack, your opponent will Parry your attack and counter accordingly. Game speed has been increased, but players in general adjust and still parry too frequently.

Playing SFIII: Third Strike in a non-tournament environment is extremely fun. Everything about the game is top-notch from the liquid smooth animation to the new Super Arts techniques. Even crystal clear pictures don't do the animation justice. It's something you need to see on your own. I'm a huge fan of SF, but SFIII never did it for me... until now, that is. Third Strike is just what I've been waiting for. **Cerberus** 























#### Okay, we've got Ryu, Ken, and Chun Li... Where's Guile and Cammy?

Much of the control schematics have changed since Second Impact. Just like Street Fighter Alpha 3 redesigned throws, rolls, and such... so has Third Strike.

High Jump—Press DOWN, UP on the stick to perform a jump with more height to it.

Super Arts—Only one Super Arts can be used at a time. When the Super gauge has been completely filled you can perform a Super Arts. The left fractional number is your maximum possible Super Arts; the right fractional number is the amount you currently have.

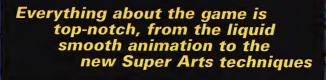
EX Special Moves—EX Special moves are powered-up special attacks. Press two attack buttons when you perform a special attack such as a Hadoken to amp up its attack power. The Super Arts gauge must be flashing to perform an EX attack. Some special attacks cannot be Ex-ed, nor can Akuma perform any EX attacks.

Throw and Grabs — To toss your opponent (much like Eggo tosses his cookies), press Jab Punch and Short Kick simultaneously. Pressing the stick LEFT or RIGHT will change the throw animation. This same command can be used to counter being thrown.

Leap Attacks — Also known as overhead attacks — these attacks require that you block high. Press Strong Punch and Forward Kick simultaneously.

Taunts — Nothing beats connecting with a super and taunting your opponent. Press Fierce Punch and Roundhouse Kick simultaneously to mock your opponent. This also charges up the Super Arts gauge.

Parrying — The bread and butter of *SFIII*; perform a parry to counter an attack or take no block damage from a special or super arts technique. Press FORWARD while standing to Parry a high attack. Press DOWN while standing to Parry a low attack. Press FORWARD while airborne to Parry.

























# JARTER RUNCHERS I EKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT









ven after some superb PlayStation translations, the *Tekken* series still draws a crowd in arcades. With flashy special moves, easy controls, and spectacular combos, *Tekken* has grown to become the favorite arcade fighting game for many a gamer. And for those who haven't had their fill of *Tekken* yet, Namco loves you a whole lot... because *Tekken Tag Tournament* is here!

Boasting over 30 playable characters and a "who knows" amount of secret characters, the reason for the name is the "Tag feature" in the game (a borrowed idea from Capcom's Vs. series). Select any two combatants and, any time during the fight, hit the "Tag" button (to the right of the Right Punch button), and voila! Your current character runs offscreen and is replaced by your tag team partner, who you control as well. There's only about a one-second delay between switching characters, so juggle combos while switching characters are a very real (and EVIL) possibility. When you 'tag' in your teammate, it also gives a resting character time to recover any health lost (again, similar to the Capcom Vs. series).

The version that I immersed myself in was not yet complete, lacking an end boss and end team. However, gameplay and graphics remain relatively the same from Tekken 3, with a few minor changes. First off, characters now seem a bit more balanced, so that any fighter can beat any other fighter regardless of speed, power, or technique. And while it was early, I swear by the gaming gods that knocked down enemies 'bounced' higher off the floor. What does this mean? Juggle heaven. In fact, I've knocked down an opponent, hit him back into the air, and 'tagged' my teammate in to continue the circus-juggling. As far as the visuals, the version I played had some very cool alternate costumes for each character. Namco will also probably be making more graphical tweaks before the game is released to the public.

Unlike the Capcom Vs. series, if one of your fighters dies in a round, the whole team loses the round. So you really have to watch your health during fights, or else you'll lose a round with one of your fighters still at full health.

Tekken Tag Tournament is set to come out in arcades sometime in late July or early August, and Namco is already talking about a national tournament this year. But don't trust me; trust the Magic 8-Ball as I ask the question: "Will Tekken Tag Tournament be one of the hottest arcade fighters this year?" Its response? "As I see it, Yes." And trust me folks, the Magic 8-Ball doesn't lie. **Dangohead** 

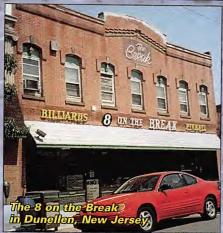








# ECC4 TOURNAMENT REPORT





The East Coast Championships, a tournament which initially started as a small convention for local SF players, has now grown into a legendary Street Fighter event. In its fourth straight year now, the event took place Memorial Day weekend from May 29th-30th at "The 8 on the Break" in Dunellen, New Jersey. The Break is no stranger to hard-core SF players, as it regularly holds weekly tourna-



ments. Only because of the hard work of founder Chris Cotty, tournament administrator Todd Dwyer, and the rest of the ECC staff can this annual event be made possible. Players gathered together to see new and old faces, to show off newfound skills, and to stake their claim at being the best that is, the best that was, and the best that's yet to come.

The biggest attraction at ECC was Street

Fighter Alpha 3, although players could also try their hand at Hyper Fighting, Super Turbo, Marvel Capcom,



Street Fighter Alpha 2, and Street Fighter 3: Second Impact. Despite the plethora of other games, Street Fighter Alpha 3 attracted the most competition, drawing a pool of 115 players. All the attendees

showed off their vast repertoire of tricks and combos, spanning an impressive array of characters... Everything from Apoc's bullying Balrog, to Cuellar's

Chunster - of Annoyance, to Cole's Tenacious D" Dhalsim, to the wonder kid Amir (who SF Chensor veteran deemed the future of hard-core arcade prowess," as non-existent as it is right now), and of course, the legendary Alex "Sixth Sense" Valle widely

acknowledged as the best SF player in the U.S. One of the more exciting matches pitted veteran Alex "Psychic-Fighters Network" Valle against "The Young SF Seer" Amir, for the First Place slot in Street Fighter Alpha 3. In the end, it was Valle and his V-ism Akuma (emulating a style similar to Daigo, the SFA3 champion in Japan) who took it home, winning 2-1 against Amir. The finals con-

> sisted of Californians: Valle versus Duong's "Patiently Slow and Deadly" Dhalsim in a best 4 out of 7 match. And as no surprise, Valle came out the winner, stifling the comeback Duong was mounting. 4-2 was the final score, with Valle using V-ism Akuma to beat out Duong's A-ism Charlie.

Street Fighter Alpha 3 had the

biggest draw and was the most hotly contested of the tournaments. Here are the results of

the rest of the ECC. Thanks to Brockington (AKA Bahn) for the detailed info regarding ECC4. Special thanks go to Charlie Wong and the all ECC4 staff. For more a detailed report of ECC4, go to www.the-nextlevel.com/features/index.html.

Dangohead

Street Fighter Alpha 3 (115 participants)

1) Alex Valle (Westminster, CA)

2) Thao Duong (Orange County, CA)

3) Amir Amirsaleh (New York, NY)

Super Street Fighter II Turbo (78 participants)

1) John Choi (Sunnyvale, CA)

2) Gary Vialdo (Virginia Beach, VA)

3) Seth Killian (Champaign, IL)





Street Fighter Alpha 2 (78 participants)

1) David Sirlin (Sunnyvale, CA)

2) Thao Duong (Orange County, CA)

3) Mike Cheng (Edison, NJ)

Marvel VS Capcom (78 participants) 1) Eddie Lee (Queens, NY)

2) Roberto Aponte (Trumbull, CT)

3) Alex Valle (Westminster, CA)

Street Fighter 3: Second Impact (63 participants)

1) Alex Valle (Westminster, CA)

2) Eddie Lee (Queens, NY)

3) Juan Gonzalez (Houston, TX)

Hyper Fighting (48 participants)

1) John Choi (Sunnyvale, CA)

2) Jesse Howard (Minneapolis, MN)

3) Jason Cole (Sunnyvale, CA)





hen Sega first announced that they would officially bring their own CD-ROM format to the gaming world, fans everywhere rejoiced. With the promise of "unlimited storage space" and "games that would go on for-

ever" and "no annoying black loading screens" gamers everywhere anxiously awaited any and all news on Sega's 'next big thing.' Expectations were high for the newest peripheral to brave the ever-treacherous add-on sea: SNES-killing games (graphically speaking) replete with 'full, two-plane, sprite scaling and bi-axial rotation'; long video sequences that would never fit on a cart (woo!); and the opportunity for true 'Redbook' audio. If the games didn't blow you away, the buzz words certainly could.

And so the promise was made...and summarily broken. Sure, one of the initial games was cool (*Wonder Dog* has always been a fav), but for the most part, it was a sad collection of sorry titles. Long video sequences gave way to the death-like *Night Trap* (<sniff>, we'll miss ya, Dana) with its rusty screen door FMV; 'full, two-plane, sprite scal-

ing and bi-axial rotation' gave way to, uh, nothing in the initial batch of games; but at least we had the blazing music of full Redbook audio (small consolation, though) However, like review-

ing a game in its alpha state (scary, stuff, folks) leveling judgement on the Sega CD based on its first clutch of games would be like a woman judging Dango on his choice of automobiles...or the lack thereof — just 'cause he doesn't have it together... Yet, that doesn't mean he never will

<crossing fingers>. And so it was with the Sega CD (jury's still Dangohead). on out Despite an initially rocky start, the system did manage to put forth its best foot and delivered games like Batman Returns (pure mania), АНЗscaling Thunderstrike (from Core, prior to their Lara infatuation) and Dark Wizard, among many others. But gamers wanted something different; something that could compete with Nintendo's new FX-chip powered killer app, StarFox. They found that 'something' in Game Arts' Silpheed.

Now I'm not here to get into some overly complex debate about whether the polygonal backgrounds in this game were real-time, pre-calculated, streamed or spooled — that's what Internet newsgroups are for. No, I'm here to perhaps evoke some sense of appreciation for what Silpheed brought to the gaming world back in the early '90s; a sense of history, perhaps. See, not only was Silpheed a harbinger (good or bad) of things to come it was also revolutionary for its time

frame. Taking their rather lackluster PC effort (published by Sierra in the States) and coupling it with awe-inspiring 3D backdrops, Game Arts set out to show gamers just what could be done with the (then) fledgling CD-ROM format.

Sure, NEC had a drive out for quite some time,















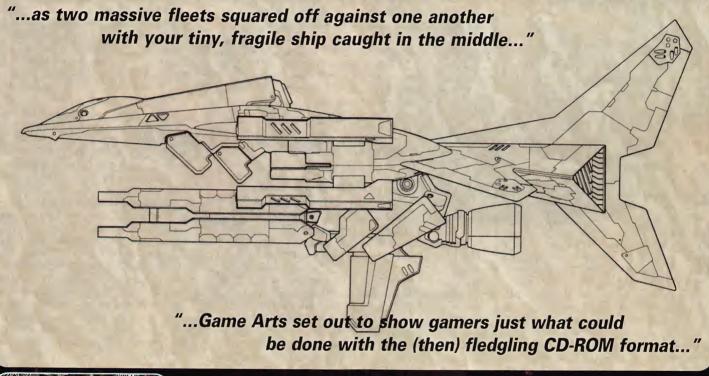






but they had never really pushed the device as anything more than extra storage room for speech and cinemas (up till the release of *Sherlock Holmes* by I-Com Simulations, NEC Japan didn't even think spooling video was possible on their drive), but the Sega CD with an extra CPU (a second Motorola 68000 chip) and a dedicated ASIC chip (to handle the scaling and rotation effects) could do things no drive till that point could dream of (of course not boosting its color handling ability was a **grievous** oversight).

Your tiny, insignificant spacecraft hurtling through level after level of stunning backgrounds melded to some slightly questionable gameplay (most people liken it to a modified version of *Gyruss*) — that spelled sensation back in the early days of Sega CD gaming. As a brief anecdote, a sales person at the local EB tried to convince me to buy the horrific *Dracula* Sega CD game over this one (they both arrived on the same date, incidentally). Sure, the game and the power ups were a bit lackluster and probably couldn't actually compare gameplay-wise to Nintendo's *StarFox*, but it was simply a spectacle the likes





of which we'd never seen before, and that made many a gamer simply ignore the so-so gameplay for some very nice eye candy. Who could forget the stunning space battle as two massive fleets squared off against one another with your tiny, fragile ship caught in the middle. Or the incredible (at the time) sequence as your ship skimmed over the Earth's (?) surface.

What it all boils down to is that Silpheed was a head-turner, but didn't feature any sort of lasting appeal. After you'd seen all the glorious pre-rendered CG backgrounds there really wasn't much to keep you coming back for more. But back then, back when every Sega fan needed a StarFox-killer, Game Arts obliged. Now if only they'd re-code the game in full 3D, and make a sorta Wing Commander-style adventure out of it (though I suppose Shadow Squadron already did that, eh?). So forget all the buzz words, bolt on down to your local retailer and dig up a used copy (got mine for \$5) just to see where we came from. **ECM** 











Anime, Manga, Asian Live-Action, J-pop, Culture, and all related products

Well, I've now seen both the Phantom Menace and Austin Powers 2 ... and I hate to say it, but I enjoyed the latter far more. Don't get me wrong, PM was a good movie, but it neither had that certain spark nor the "serious atmosphere while still a kid-safe movie" feel that the original trilogy had. Of course, since I grew up on Star Wars, since it was my life, the fantasy and myth that I looked up to, I'm sure nothing to follow could have ever lived up to that. Moving on, a few of you have pointed out a rather sloppy error that I made a few issues back: the name of the song that I love so much by Speed is "Nettaiya," NOT "Kettaiya." Baka shidoshi. Finally, if you haven't played it yet, go play Crazy Taxi. No words can express how fun this game is, and driving like a madman around an actual city with a passenger screaming at you to slow down is a pleasure you just can't get enough of. And it's coming out for Dreamcast? I love this world... - shidoshi

# Manga Scene Special Feature

#### **Five Star Stories**

Many years ago, back when puppies where the oldest living creatures on the Earth, I was a young anime fan getting into all weird those "Japanese cartoons and comics" that you could only find at the 'weird" comic shops. Somehow I received in the mail a General Products catalog (a catalog with a very infamous, and interesting, history), and



would sit for hours looking at all of the cool stuff included within. Every time I browsed through the mecha models section, I had to stop at these weird robots that looked like they were designed to resemble extravagant knights from the middle ages. Intricate, elegant, and just plain cool, I always wondered who they were and what their story was. Fast forward a few years, and I was surprised to run across a manga running in Newtype called "The Five Star Stories." Surprised because I had finally found the source of those mecha, I finally knew where they were from and had at least some connection to make to them. Ever since then, I kept a small wish, deep down inside of me, that someday someone would bring the series over to the US so that I might one day get to satisfy my curiosity.

It's been a while... a LONG while, but finally, The Five Star Stories is in English and making its introduction on our shores. As soon as I found out that the US version had been released, I was on the phone ordering myself a copy. For \$8.98, you get an 80-page first volume which contains 60 pages of actual manga, and the rest of the book filled with detailed information and artwork concerning the back story for FSS, the characters, notes from its creator, a guide to the "background sounds" written in katakana, and an extra little sticker packet. The book is big, reprinting the manga at the exact size as it originally ran (and is still running) in Newtype, and one of the coolest and best parts is that it's being released in Japanese format. For any of you out there who haven't seen Viz doing this with the DragonBall Z and Evangelion manga, that means that the book reads the traditional Japanese way - from right to left - instead of having the artwork flipped and formatted like a standard English-reading book. Each English volume is said to be about one-third of the Japanese collection volumes, and if all goes well new volumes will be printed bi-monthly from now until the sum- . mer of 2003 in order to give us the complete FSS saga. That was the one request FSS's creator, Mamori Nagano had for an English version - that it be published in full until the end — and, barring financial difficulties preventing them from doing so, that is what Toys Press

So what exactly IS Five Star Stories about, anyhow? Well, to put it as simply as possible, the first volume opens by saying this: "This is a tale of the god of light, Amaterasu, and his wife Lachesis, who emerged victorious from an era of wars that raged throughout four solar systems. It will also tell of the many bold and daring headliners who battled courageously during those times, some victorious, some not, but always in the

Inc., the publisher, intends to do.

name of chivalry." Of course, saying that about FSS is like saying that Neon Genesis Evangelion is about "some kids who pilot big robots and fight aliens," but at least it's a start. If your idea of a deep and engrossing storyline is something along the lines of

Ranma 1/2, then FSS proba-

bly isn't for you (no

offense to Ranma 1/2 intended, of course). However, if you are like me and are dying for another manga on a similar level as things like Nausicaa, then for you the release of FSS here in the states will be like Christmas coming early. Currently, the only way to purchase the English release of the Five Star Stories is through mail-order from Kinokuniya Bookstores. For contact information, check out the Toys Press website at http://www.toyspress.com or

> in San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, and New York). Trust me, if you're looking for

> give one of their many locations

a call (their stores can be

found, among other places,

the next big sweeping epic manga title, it's well worth your time to track down a copy. - shidoshi

Remember, this panel reads from right to left, not left to right.





Eat Man: Second Course

Action · Viz · 13+ 200 pages • US Format • Graphic Novel

The premise behind Eat Man is certainly two things - very interesting, and very weird. Bolt Crank, an "explorer for hire" (sort of the bounty hunter/mercenary/guide type), possesses a rather peculiar skill: he can eat anything made of metal, and reproduce it from his hand at a later time. Of course, a person who can do such things becomes well known pretty quickly, and it seems that Bolt is always in demand for one task or another. Bolt

ends up basically becoming a wanderer, travelling from one town to another finding jobs and means of survival at the various places that he stops. Of course, it seems that more often than not Bolt's adventures involve a cute girl somehow, and such is exactly what we get here. The dying wish of a kind-hearted swordsman, the protection of a city from a huge water

guardian, the finding of a slave girl who has escaped from her captors, the role of bodyguard for a girl whose blood can bring eternal life, and the locating of a young mermaid who was taken from her people long ago - these are the adventures that Bolt must deal with whether he wishes to or not. Eat Man is a cool title, better than the anime version but not exactly the best thing that I've ever seen. My biggest complaint is that none of the stories really have any connection to one another, something which might help to improve the storyline somewhat dramatically. Fun stories and an interesting and groovy hero are enough to make Eat Man at least worth looking at. - shidoshi

Voyeur

Action/Drama · Viz/Pulp · 17+ 230 pages · US Format · Graphic Novel



Ko has reasons not to trust people... good reasons... but for the most part, he trusts his girlfriend. But one night, after they've said their goodbyes and she takes off, events happen that make him begin to question that trust. Ko meets a strange man, a voyeur, who tells him that his girl is screwing around with another man. Ko refuses to believe it at first, but as time goes on, his mind can't get off that thought. Was that

strange man actually correct? Soon, the only way Ko can be satisfied is if he sees for himself. But in order to do so, he is forced to team up with the voyeur, and begins to get sucked down into his world of perversion. The two become friends after a while, and begin a business of voyeurism, to

catch those who are trying to catch unsuspecting people. But even as they find their first client, they run into a challenge that might be more than the pair can handle. Voyeur certainly lives up to its name, in the sense that it's a title that is both good and a bit disturbing at the same time. It's one of those kinds of stories where you aren't sure if you want to root for the so-called "heroes" or not, and instead are just along for the ride due to your curiosity of wanting to see what comes next... just like the voyeurs themselves. Not an overly wonderful manga (especially in the art department), but I'm a sucker for the weirder, darker kind of stuff, so I got a kick out of it. If it sounds like your kind of bag, give it a go. - shidoshi

AnimeFan rates each title reviews on a scale of A (excellent), B (good), C (average), D (poor), and F (horrible). Remember, a grade of C isn't bad, and only when a title starts getting into the D range should you start to consider avoiding it at all costs. For DVD titles, two scores are present, one for the anime itself, and the other for it's DVD presentation. The DVD grade covers everything from image quality to package to extras, so while a DVD may look beautiful, it could loose points for having no extras or other such issues.

#### **Guide to Ratings** Codes

We'll use this example:

Sub I Dub VHS ILD I DVD

Black: The title is available in that format / language. So, for our example, the title is out in both Sub and Dub on VHS.

Underlined: The version being reviewed. So, we're reviewing the VHS Sub version.

Greyed: Not available. So, our title isn't out on LD.

Red: Coming soon / planned. Our example title is planned for release on DVD.

Send comments, letters, artwork to:

#### AnimeFan

6301 DeSoto Avenue Unit #E Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Or: shidoshi@gamefan.com

# **Goods Showcase**

#### **Pokemon Card Game**

Anymore, it's pretty hard to ignore any portion of the Pokemon mania (or "Pokemania" as my grandmother used to call it), so I figured it was high time that I said a word or two on the Pokemon card game. If you were around for last issue, I gave you a taste of it by taunting you with the special E3 version of the Pikachu card that I got at the show, but this time

around we'll take a look at the game itself and what it's all about.

Produced by Wizards of the Coast (you know, those guys who made that Magic: the **Gathering** game), the **Pokemon** "Trading Card Game" is a game that you play using various special

cards, meant to reproduce the world of Pokemon battles as best it can. If you've ever played Magic:TG, then you'll have a good yet basic idea of what's going on here. Each player has a deck of Pokemon cards, and you take turns putting out a Pokemon creature card from a "reserve" of five Pokemon cards. With careful strategy and planning, you then use the Pokemon you've put

into the fight in an attempt to defeat your opponent's Pokemon. If you Pokemon totally defeats theirs, then the game is over and you walk away victorious. However, there are of course a number of "modifier" cards which can be played to swing the battle in either player's favor (cards such as healing potions of Pokemon switching cards), and "energy" cards which are required in order for a Pokemon to be able to use better attacks.

I'll admit it, I used to be a sucker for Magic:tG, and these Pokemon cards sure are D ENERGY

cute, but the last thing I need is another card game for me (and me money) to get sucked into. However, if such a game of skill involving those cute little creatures sounds like your cup of tea, then go buy a starter deck or two and find some unsuspecting friend to play against. I do kind of worry about this game, however. I have spent NO

money on Pokemon cards at all just took what was offered to me — and somehow I already have five Pikachu cards. If these things are reproducing on their own like I fear, then it won't be long before I'll be buried in a pile of cards depicting the silly little yellow rat. - shidoshi



Adventure · Movie · Anime Works · 16+ 45 min · Sub | Dub · VHS | LD | DVD

How many of these types of anime have come out? Cute little girls who are actually cold, emotionless killers. Yet, I don't remember any of said anime turning out nearly as well as Kite did. We are introduced to the story of Sawa, a pretty, youthful girl who has been dragged into a dark underground where she is now a ruthless killer. Her parents killed, she was taken in by a corrupt cop who runs a "services for hire" ring on the side. Now Sawa must decide if she is to exist in the life she has found herself in, or if she has the courage to break free and escape the world that is slowly dragging her down. What makes Kite so good? It's a number of things, all pieced together to craft a high-action show that is as strong on characters as it is on action. The character designs are great, both in their look and personality (Sawa is SUCH a cutie). The direction in the show is superb, and quiet exposition scenes are done just as well as the fast-paced, high action ones. Such great direction is something that is not only rare in most anime, but in most Hollywood action titles as well, so seeing it handled like it was here is a definite sight for sore eyes. This excellent direction is what helps support Kite's strongest area - the action. Be it a two-second gunfight, or the fierce battle that spans a few office buildings, Kite's action is up there with the very best of the gunfights that the US and Asia have given us over the years. There really aren't a lot of top quality "high speed gun blazing action flicks" in the anime world — at least if you ask me — and to have one that is not only good, but cares just as much about characters and storyline as it does action, is long overdue. Finally, our little concoction is topped of with a fantastic soundtrack, a string of jazzy melodies that fit the anime perfectly and give it that final touch of atmosphere, and a very commendable English dub. Kite is a phenomenal title, a good escape for those times when you're looking for nothing more than some hardcore death and destruction. Some of you out there might not be familiar with Media Blasters (the company under which Anime Works, Kitty Media, and Tokyo Shock all reside), as even though they have been around for a while they are still a rather unrecognized name when it comes to anime in the US. However, if they keep snatching up and releasing awesome titles such as this, and the below-reviewed Eff

**Princess** Rane, then I can't hope them for become a household name fast enough. Now to start bugging them to put some of these titles out on DVD...





#### Queen Emeraldas

Adventure · Movie · ADV Films · 15-60 min · Sub | Dub · VHS | LD | DVD

The Afressians, a race of beings who wield power and the desire to conquer those weaker than them, are terrorizing the galaxy and any innocent people who get in their way. They blaze a path of destruction wherever they go, but when they happen to cross paths with the infamous space pirate Emeraldas, and her mighty starship the Queen Emeraldas, the Afressians suddenly realize that they may have met their match. Is one space pirate enough to go up against an entire armada, or have the Afressians bitten off far more than they can chew? As I said last issue with DNA Sights 999.9, I love Leiji Matsumoto's character designs the tall, slender look he gives to all of his female (and some of the male) characters. Emeraldas is the epitome of hardcore, beautiful and elegant yet lethally deadly at the same time. She is a character, much like Harlock, who has such a presence in Queen Emeraldas that they could make even a mediocre title watchable simply by showing up. Leiji's character designs are complimented with a rather odd art style, one which uses a lot of dark tones and heavy black lines, and while this look wouldn't work with most anime out there, it suits his characters perfectly. Unfortunately, QE misses being an A-caliber title due to a few shortcomings it sadly has. The dub is rather uneven - some voices are rather good, while others are only okay - and there is, by far, too much use of REALLY badly rendered CG scenes. Why do some anime creation houses have this obsession with mixing horrible CG into their anime? [grumble] I guess I'll never understand. Anyhow, Queen Emeraldas is

still a great show, with wonderful characters and a lot of enjoyment to be had. The whole CG aspect doesn't destroy this show or anything it's more of an annoyance - but unfortunately bad CG in a good anime is one of my largest animerelated pet peeves. Still, don't let that stop you from catching a great OAV title like this one. - shidoshi

Maison Ikkoku: Godai Come Home

Comedy • TV (2 eps) • Viz Video • 13+ 52 min · Sub | Dub · VHS | LD | DVD

Godai ... shacking up with some other girl? Did Kyoko actually see what she thought she saw? When Godai calls to ask the manager for his room back, she tells him that it's already rented. But then she finds out the truth about Godai's situation, and goes on a mad hunt all over town trying to find him. If she can't find Godai and he never comes home, will she blame herself for driving him away from Maison Ikkoku for good? Next, the strange and somewhat creepy Yotsuya gives Godai an egg in the middle of the night. When Godai wakes up the next morning to find that it wasn't a dream, and that he indeed has the egg, he panics at the thought of what the message could possibly mean. Is he supposed to eat the egg, or protect it? Should he put it in the refrigerator, or keep it warm? As Godai and the other tenants of Maison Ikkoku ponder on the reason behind the egg, their minds run wild and the egg almost becomes a treasure under lock and key. Why DID Yotsuya give Godai the egg, anyhow? Per usual, Maison Ikkoku is a great show, and my personal choice for the best that Rumiko Takahashi has created. It's a lighthearted soap opera with a superb cast and enough mellow humor to keep it from ever taking itself too seriously. As well, even though I disagree with some of Viz's dubs sometimes, I still go on record as saying that the Maison Ikkoku dub is one of the most natur-

al-sounding dubs out there. It's one of those few dubs that doesn't sound like it's a show that has been dubbed, and to be brutally honest, I prefer the English voices to the Japanese ones. I know, I know, I'll burn as a heretic, but it's the truth. Anyhow, enough talking Maison Ikkoku is a wonderful series that you should be watching if you aren't. It WOULD be nice if Viz would give us at least one more episode per volume, though. - shidoshi



http://www.gamefan.com/anim

#### Eat Man: Volume 3

Adventure • OAV • Anime Village • 13+ 48 min · Sub | Dub · VHS | LD | DVD



Since I've given you the basic points of the Eat Man storyline in my review of the manga graphic novel, I'm going to skip that part here so that I'm not just repeating myself. The anime version of Eat Man brings Mr. Bolt Crank and his talents to your television screen, bringing the story to life with color and animation and a slightly more serious tone. Yes, when compared to the manga, this is a somewhat more "mature" version, with a quieter, darker Bolt and more adult themed adventures (in the way of seriousness, not perviness). There are those anime titles that work better in anime form than in manga form, and vice versa, and Eat Man to me is one of those titles that falls into the latter situation. In bringing Bolt Crank into the world of animation, something seems to have been lost, a certain spark seems to not have been lit like it was when he was in his original print form. The anime is slow quite often, and where each volume is a mere 48 minutes, I would SWEAR that they were actually two hours in length. What really bothered me, though, was the interaction between Bolt and the other characters in the various stories. First of all, it seems like NO ONE even notices that there is this guy going around eating metal. "Oh, he just ate my gun, okay," seems to be the attitude that

most people have. Not only that, but an alarming amount of female characters instantly fall for and get rather friendly with this strange metal-eating wanderer. If you ask me, a guy who goes around chewing on steel and iron and looks the way he does is NOT the type of guy I would instantly trust with my life and secrets... call me a kook if you will. Finally, it doesn't seem like they much play up Bolt's "special gift" to the extent that they should, or the manga does: the series seems less about a guy who can eat and reproduce metal items and more like a series about a guy who happens to be a bit odd. Eat Man reminds me a

bit of those TV shows that were popular in the '80s, where a person or persons wandered from town to town happening upon situations in which they get mixed up. Those kinds of shows, while interesting in certain ways, usually have little of a solid running storyline or build-up to give them strength, and the same tends to be the problem here. There's certainly a lot of possibility here, which showed through in both episodes, but in the end it seems like the creators didn't know exactly what to do with said possibility. Because of this, Eat Man certainly has its strengths, but they are far overshadowed by the weaknesses. - shidoshi

# Battle Skipper: The Movie

Action · OAV · US Manga · 11+ 90 min · Sub I Dub · VHS I LD I DVD



At the St. Ignacio School for Girls, THE club to be in is the Debutante Club. All of the coolest and most popular girls belong to the club, and all freshman students dream of having their own place among the elite. Debutante Club is no simple group of snotty girls... it is, instead, a team of ruthless girls who wish to take over not only the school, but the world itself, with their giant "Battle Skipper" robots. The only people with the guts, and robots of their own, to go up against the evil Debutante Club is the small, and slightly oddball group of girls who make up the Etiquette Club. The Etiquette Club is a front for the Lighting Attacker Exstars, a team determined to keep the world safe from harm with their super advanced prototype Battle Skippers. Cute girls, big robots, sound like a great start to an anime, doesn't it? Unfortunately, actually watching the show crushed any hopes that I had. Battle Skipper: the Movie is a title geared towards the younger crowd, a point which becomes guite obvious after watching any small amount of the show. The problem is, in my opinion, children deserve better than this. BS:tM suffers from a cast of characters which are horribly one dimensional, art and

animation that are laughably bad far too much of the time, and mecha designs that are so utterly boring that their designs can only be explained by the toy versions of them that you are supposed to buy. To be brutally honest. this show reminded me of the myriad of terrible US cartoons that have been

dumped onto our poor children in recent years. Honestly, BS:tM looks like something that was crafted for our shores to help sell a new line of "cool space robots" to our youth. The reason this title squeaks by with a C- is that the kids might get into it (though there are far better anime titles for the younger viewers, and even if I were younger I'd find these robots boring), and there are some rather funny parts and lines in the dub, intentional or not. With all of the top quality titles that US Manga Corps and its sister companies have, I really think they should have left this one but a faint memory. - shidoshi

### Elf Princess Rane

Comedy/Adv · OAV · AnimeWorks · 16+ 60 min · Sub | Dub · VHS | LD | DVD



Go Takarada wants to be a treasure hunter. His parents are world famous explorers, travelling Europe looking for mystical and fabulous items from the past, and Go has set his heart on following in their footsteps. His hard work and searching has yet to prove success, until one day when from a flash of light. a small yet beautiful faerie-like elf appears. Go is certain that she is the one legend says will lead an explorer to fabulous treasure ... while Rane, the elf, is actually looking for a brave hero to lead HER to the treasure. Misunderstandings or not, the two embark on a journey for a mystical fortune that proves to be far more than they bargained for! Can Go and Rane survive not only their trek, but the squabbles between the wealthy Yumenokata and the Fire Department, the lovesick Mari who longs to be with Go, the beautiful yet strange man who is chasing Mari as she chases Go, Go's seemingly never-ending supply of sisters, and a second elf Leen who has come to kill Rane? I'm not going to say much about the story, for two very important reasons. First, the kooky curve that they throw into the story is part of what makes it so much fun, and explaining it here would not only not make it sound very exciting, but it would also spoil the anime for you. Second ... well, to be honest, I'm

not totally sure what the story is exactly. This is, and I feel very confident saying this, one of the STRANGEST anime comedies that I have EVER seen. Not strange in a weird, surreal kind of way — that would be too simple. No, Eff **Princess Rane** has all of the foundation of your average anime comedy, but then infuses it with elements that are so damn odd that they make your brain hurt. I could point out the guy who talks as if he were making up a language as he went along (complete with backward subtitles), Rane, the elven girl who thinks she's making sense when everyone else hears total gibberish, the other elf girl who keeps forgetting that she's come to kill Rane ... and that's only the start of the character and situation lunacy. Half the time you're laughing because the show is so funny, the other half because you're so confused that you think you're going insane. This is truly one of those titles that is just so out there, so weird, so utterly bizarre that it entertains you and makes you laugh, while at the same time scares you to no end. And yet, that is its wonderful charm. I STILL break out into fits of laughter thinking of many of the scenes from this show (especially the rap), and between this and the new Austin Powers movie I probably won't stop laughing for at least a month. If this doesn't become a hit over here, then I'll lose all faith in US anime fans. "Gotchabaguse!!!" - shidoshi



# DVD Connection Anime - ultra high-qual digital style

## Tenchi Muyo!: Ultimate Collection

Comedy/Action • OAV (14 eps.) • Pioneer • 13+ 420 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

#### Anime

I can still remember my very first experience with Tenchi Muyol — I had just purchased a LaserDisc player, so that I could get versions of my favorite movies and anime that would not only look better, but would also be permanent. Wanting something that I could actually play on my LD player, I purchased the first volume of an anime called Tenchi Muyo!

It looked kind of cool, and it was one of the few LD anime titles I could find at my local store. After watching episode, I was



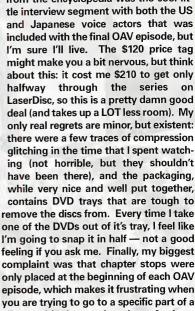
hooked, and I purchased the next five LDs whenever I had the chance over the next few weeks. What would it be like for me to relive such a large part of my anime past? The Tenchi OAV series stands the test of time; it's still quite good, and yet ... after seeing all of the various incarnations of Tenchi that I have now, it no longer seems as exciting as it used to. The

"true definition of Tenchi Muyo" status that the original OAV series (the first six episodes, actually) held for so long has now been, in my opinion, passed on to the Tenchi movies. Some may argue that the simpler, less "multiple personalities" characters of the original OAVs are when Tenchi is at its strongest, but I've come to know and love the characters we know now and the qualities they've

come to have, so it's hard for me to go back. It IS interesting to see some of the aspects of the Tenchi mythos that have quietly slipped away, and realize how much I missed them ... Ryoko's cute little tail that has long disappeared, for example. The Tenchi OAV series still stands as the foundation for all that was to come, and no Tenchi fan can truly be a Tenchi fan without having seen this series ... but I am no longer of the opinion that this is the only Tenchi series to really count.

DVD

No matter what some laserphiles may try to argue, Tenchi NEVER looked or sounded this good on LD. Pioneer decided that if they were going to do this collection, that they would do it right, and Tenchi has been digitally remastered with a new THX-certified transfer and a Japanese audio track that was remixed in Dolby Digital 5.1. Tenchi's fourteen episodes (Mihoshi Special is not included) are tucked away on two DVDs, with a third being version 3.0 of the "Tenchi Encyclopedia" which has come along with the DVD releases of the two movies. The encyclopedia is awesome, packed with goodies, and has a wonderfully nice layout and design to it. The only thing that I felt was missing from the encyclopedia was the cool lit-



certain episode. Even with those minor imperfections, Pioneer should be commended for not only redoing one of their most popular titles on DVD, but doing it right as well. Releases like this are what make DVD such a wonderful format, and if you still doubt how much DVD can do for anime after seeing this set then there's no chance you'll ever be convinced. Hopefully we'll not only see more like this from Pioneer ([cough] Hakkenden [cough]), but from other companies as well. - shidoshi



The Venus Wars

Adventure · Movie · US Manga · 15+ 104 min · Sub | Dub · VHS | LD | DVD

#### Anime

A short distance into the future, mankind has spread itself onto a second home, a terraformed Venus. Even on Venus, however, people can't always get along, and an old war between two factions on the planet rages up again. Hiro Seno, who is part of a sports motorbike racing team, finds himself following his pals on a plan to destroy one of the enemy's tanks. The plan goes wrong, and Hiro and crew end up as mercenaries fighting in the war they never wanted to be part of in the first place. Hiro must find a way to not only survive, but escape from the military unit and make it back to the friends and home that he was forced to leave. If you've read the manga version, don't expect to see the same story here, or you might be disappointed. That said, this is a very cool movie, with some seriously nice animation and fast-paced scenes. Even though The Venus Wars was made in 1989 (which makes it rather old by today's standards), a great many of the scenes put to shame most of the new stuff in terms of art and animation. We don't get a chance to get to know and care about most of the characters, but beyond that one sore point, this one's time well spent.

#### DVD

DVD can do two things with an anime title — it can give you pretty much what you see on VHS, just a bit crisper and cleaner, or it can restore colors and "life" that was lost due to the poor quality of VHS. The Venus Wars DVD is a prime example of the first option — it looks good, but just doesn't have that spark. Unfortunately, that's usually the case with older anime, as for one reason or another there isn't a lot to work with in the first place. This disc COULD have looked better, I'm sure, both in terms of color quality and a few slight bits of obvious compression in the background here and there, but for the most part I had little complaint about the transfer. Throw in a few nice little extras, the usual DVD options, and you've got a DVD release that is just like the other two this month - nothing horrible exactly, but nothing really done wrong, which gets the job done. - shidoshi

"Are you hungry? ... You sure you don't want anything? Not even a Hot Pocket?"

# AF News Service

#### Shidoshi's Rant

Since news is a bit thin this month, and this topic has been bugging me a bit lately anyhow, I'm going to take a moment to rant about something that's wrong with the US anime industry. Bad choices of voice actors? Poor subtitles? Horrible packaging? No,

it's none of that. It's a plague far bigger than any of those that is infecting more and more US anime releases as it continues to grow ... the lack of volume numbers. For some reason, more series releases than ever are coming out with no sort of volume numbers on them at all. Some titles, such as Pioneer's TV series releases, at least have episode numbers on the back of them so that you can organize them that way (unfortunately, this isn't the case with Pokemon). But others, such as Viz releases like Ranma 1/2 and Maison Ikkoku, not only have no volume numbers on them, but no episode numbers as well. Then there are things like Sakura Wars and Master of Mosquiton from ADV Films, titles that you can't even tell are part of a series.

Maybe it's one of those things that seems horribly obvious to one person, but doesn't occur to someone else. Still, why are so many anime companies doing this? For your normal fan, sometimes the only way to know for sure the volume order of a certain series is to pay attention to when each one comes out ... but even then, sometimes multiple volumes are released at once, and it's not easy to keep close track of every anime series out there. For some people, the argument over volume numbers might seem like a silly one, but for anyone who has at least a few volumes of any one series which doesn't have volume numbers, and they get mixed up, then you know exactly what I'm talking about. So, for all of

the anime companies out there, this simple message: for the love of Belldandy, PLEASE at least put a small volume number somewhere on your product so that us fans can organize our collections without going utterly insane. Thank you.

#### **Central Park Media News**

Just a quick update on some of the things that Central Park Media has planned for the near future. Probably their biggest title is the Lodoss War television series, Record of Lodoss War: Chronicles of the Heroic Knight. The first volume, "A New Legend Begins," will see release on August 10th, and will be followed by three more volumes, each with three episodes. They've also got Midnight Panther, which is based on the manga, as well as Wild Cards. While Wild Cards (or is it Wildcards?) won't be out until December, I wanted to be sure to mention it as it stars as one of the lead voice actors our favorite live-action anime girl, Apollo Smile. And, for those of you out there waiting for the Revolutionary Girl Utena DVD releases (which you ALL should be), "Rose Collection 1" should be coming out as you are reading this. The first volume will contain the first seven episodes, with the other volume having the remaining six episodes of the first "segment" of Utena. CPM is still up in the air as to if they will be releasing the remaining episodes of Utena, so be sure to purchase yourself a copy of the show (so that they know the demand is there) and write to them telling them that you want to see more!

#### The End of Tenchi?

From rumors that are going around right now, it sounds as if Tenchi Muyo in Love 2 — the new Tenchi Muyo movie that will be hitting both Japan and the US in late summer - may be the

last Tenchi anime of any type to be produced. To refresh your memory, I'll take you back to the supposed storyline for the new movie that I reported on a number of issues ago:

On a warm spring day, it seems that Ryoko and Aeka have finally had it with Tenchi and his wishy-washiness when it comes to telling them which girl he likes better. Tenchi, confronted with two girls demanding him to profess his love to them, chooses Option C, which entails making a mad run for it. Taking his leave to the hills around the Masaki home, he ends up getting lost, and during this time he loses his memory for some reason. Six months later, Ryoko and Aeka FINALLY decide to go out and look for him. They stumble upon Tenchi, looking older, having totally forgotten about his past, and living with a woman named Haruna. Of course, as always, a new girl in Tenchi's life is bound to cause havoc, and questions arise such as what has happened to Tenchi and who this new woman is.

From the quick teaser that was included with the DVD Ultimate Collection, I am VERY much looking forward to this new movie for two reason: the art style looks a bit different in a way that I like, and it seems to be a more mature, serious movie dealing with the relationships between the characters and nothing to do with aliens or monsters or outer space or any of that. But, you say, that's what Tenchi is supposed to be about! I know, but if the Tenchi cast is going to go out, I'd much rather it be in a dramatic and serious way. But, we'll just have to wait and see how it turns out. - shidoshi

# Previews up upcoming titles News Service Previews





# Tenchi Muyo in Love! 2

(tentative title: Tenchi Forever)

# **Bubblegum Crisis 2040**

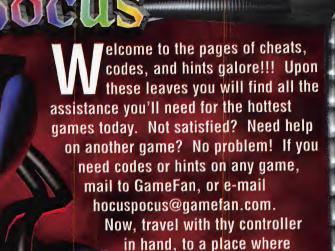












GRAND PRIZE GXTV!

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FIRST PRIZE

VIEWPOINT GAME OF YOUR CHOICE

**SECOND PRIZE** 

POCKET GAMEBOY

THIRD PRIZE

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EXtvCONTEST

GXTV is the world's first video game TV with hyperamplified sound and graphics. Enhance the thrill of gaming with adjustable speaker doors, stereo surround sound and a 15-watt sub woofer. Plus, the intense screen graphics will make you feel like your head's right inside the game. GXTV is also a 181-channel, 13" stereo TV with two A/V inputs, stereo headphone jack, backlit remote control and tilt/swivel stand. So whatcha waitin' for? Send in those codes and maybe you can win one of these GXTVs for yourself!

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If getting around London seems like foreign territory to you, here's a list of codes for you to use. All codes are entered at the Player Name screen.

99 Lives: MCVICAR

9999990 Points: BIGBEN

All Levels: RAZZLE

All Levels READERWIFE

No Cops GRASS

Combo Cheat 1: (all weapons, all levels, get out of jail, full armor) SORTED

Combo Cheat 2 (all weapons, armor, get out of jail free): TOOLEDUP

The Code to End All Codes
This code give you all weapons, infinite
ammo, all levels, get out of jail free, 99
lives, no cops, and full armor.
HAROLDHAND



EA Sports Dream team Select "Single Game" from the main menu. Then at the team selection screen, press left, right, left, right, left,





right, left, right, left, right, left, right. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly. This team is made up of the game's developers with excellent ability stats. They'll also look weird, as some will be colored all blue or pink, while others have extra small or extra large bats.



**EXAMPLE:** Bill Clinton

Politics - Real or Fake

**EXAMPLE:** Hollyfield vs Lewis

Boxing - Real or Fake

?

**EXAMPLE:** A 350lb 6 foot 4 inch giant does a back flip from 15 feet in the air on live television.

Scoops Wrestling...
Everything else is FAKE!

Scoopswrestling.com - Real News, Real Results, Real-Time

Hit a homerun

While in the batter's box, hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press Triangle, Square, Triangle, Circle, X, Square, left, right. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.



Homerun sounds

While running around the bases after hitting a homerun, press Circle to hear a whistle, Triangle to hear a soft horn, or Square to hear a loud horn.



Strike out the batter While on the pitching mound, hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press up, down, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Circle, X, Square. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.





Control camera

While playing a game, hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press right, left, up, down, right, and left. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly. Use the following actions to control the camera:

> L1 + D-pad: Move camera faster R1 + D-pad: Turn camera L2: Zoom out R2: Zoom in Triangle: Higher view Square: Lower view

Announcer comments

Enter one of the following codes while playing a game to hear the corresponding announcement. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly:

Additional batter information Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press left, Square, up, Triangle.

Historical commentary Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press up, Triangle, right, Circle.

Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press down, X, right, Circle.

Weather Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press X, down, Triangle, up.

**Dynamite Deka 2** Bonus Missions, Extra Characters

**Bonus Missions** 

Complete Missions 1, 2, and 3 for each character and Missions 4, 5, and 6 will open up. Each of the additional missions will correspond to Missions, 1, 2 and 3 with the following changes:

Mission 4 — follows Mission 1, but you will only have 1 Life, all weapons do double damage, and no continues.

Mission 5 — follows Mission 2, but you have a time limit for each room, and no continues.

Mission 6 — follows Mission 3, but you start with 1 pixel of life, very few health packets, no power ups, and no contin-

Play as the Monkey

To play as the Monkey, you must complete Mission 4, 5, and 6. Monkey will then be selectable at the character screen (he fights identical to Bruno)

Play as Old Skool Bruno Collect all the illustrations found in the game, and you will unlock old school Bruno (from Die Hard Arcade).

Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko Multiple Gameplay Codes





Debug mode

Pause the game, then hold R2 while pressing up, Circle, right, up, left, right, and down. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly. Then, resume the game and press Select to display a list of options including level select, sound debug, collectibles, and more.



Invincibility

Pause the game, then hold L2 while pressing down, up, left, left, Triangle, right, down. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.



Gex quotes

Pause the game, then hold L2 and press down, right, left, circle, up, and right. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly. Resume the game and press Select to have Gex make a comment.

Army Men 3D All Weapons, Etc.



All Weapons

Start a new game, then pause the game and quickly press Square, Circle, R1, L1, R1+R2.



Campaign Select At the main menu, quickly press Square, Circle, R1, L1, L1 + R1.





Invincibility
Start a new game, then pause and press
Square, Circle, L1, L1 + L2.

RollCage Everything Code, Turbo Start



Everything Unlocked
At the Password screen, enter MAX-CHEAT. This will prompt a "Invalid Password" message. However, if you go back into the game, this code will unlock all leagues, mirror mode, and Mega Time Trial.





#### Turbo Start

Start your game as you normally would. Pick Jet as your driver and start a race. As the timer starts counting down, when it gets to "1", hit the accelerate button to get a turbo start.

#### Harpoon Deathmatch

At the Password screen, enter HAFIJEAF to unlock the Harpoon Deathmatch mode.



#### The Big Cheat

At the Password screen, enter HHMP-NEED. This will unlock all expert difficulty tracks, the bonus car, Mega Time Trial, mirror mode, and all Deathmatch modes.



#### Air horn

At the Password screen, enter AIRHORNS. This will prompt an "Invalid Password" message. Start a game and while playing, press Select to hear the horn.

#### Vigilante 8 Mondo Codus Operandi







#### Alien Vehicle

At the Password Screen enter GIMME\_DA\_ALIEN to play the alien saucer vehicle.



All Vehicles Except the Alien
At the Password Screen enter
GANGS\_UNLOCKED to unlock the
remaining characters.







All Levels, Characters and Vehicles
At the Password Screen enter
JTBT7CFD1LRMGW to open up all the
stages and cars.



Choose the Same Car
To allow multiple players to use the same car, at the Password Screen enter
MIX MATCH CARS.

Enable Ultra-High Resolution
At the Password Screen enter
MAX\_RESOLUTION.



Enhanced Missiles
At the Password Screen enter MIS-SILE\_ATTACK.



God Mode

At the Password Screen enter the password LIVING\_FOREVER.

Rapid-Fire Weapons
At the Password Screen enter
FIRE\_NO\_LIMITS.

Reduced Gravity
At the Password Screen enter
A\_MOON\_GETAWAY for some major air
during jumps.

All-Star Baseball 2000 Gameplay Codes



Ball Trail
At the "Enter Cheats" menu, enter WLD-WLDWST for a smoking trail effect on the baseball.





Big Ball Mode (a.k.a. "The Ngo Cheat") At the "Enter Cheats" menu, enter BCH-BLKTPTY for a big baseball.

Blackout Mode

At the "Enter Cheats" menu, enter WTOTL and everything will be pitch black.

Blind Mode

At the "Enter Cheats" menu, enter MYEYES. The graphics will be blurry.

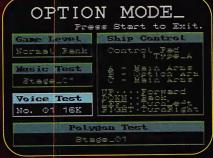


Small Players Mode At the "Enter Cheats" menu, enter TOMTHUMB for small players.

Silpheed (Sega CD)
Bonus Graveyard Hocus Pocus

Harder Game

When the introduction starts playing, press B, B, A, C, up, left, right, down, up, and A on Controller 2. Now start a normal game and you should be playing on the hardest difficulty setting.



Level Select

While the introduction is playing, press down, down, up, up, right, left, right, left, A, B, Start. A new "Stage Select" option should appear. Select a level and press A to begin your game.





Shield Recharge

While the introduction is playing, press Right, Left, A, Right, Up, C, B, Down, Left, B, A, Up, Start. While playing, you can recharge your shields by pressing A on Controller Two.



#### Voice Test

At the title screen, select Options with Controller One. Now hold A + B + C on Controller Two. With these held, press Start on Controller One. In the Option screen you will see a new option called Voice Test.

#### Lunar: Silver Star Story Mini-Game, FMV Sequences



Lords of Lunar

To play the mini-game "Lords of Lunar" (based on the old skool game Warlords), insert the "Making Of Lunar" disc into the PS. When the intro sequence of the making of game begins, press up, down, left, right, Triangle, and Start. You can actually play up to eight human players in this game!

FMV sequences on Disk One

To see the all FMV sequences of Disk One, insert the "Making Of Lunar" disc and enter the "Lords of Lunar" code from above. When you're at the title screen of "Lords of Lunar," insert Disc 1 of Lunar:SSSC and choose to exit. The FMV sequences should start playing in the order they're played in the game.

#### **Game Shark Codes**

Bloody Roar 2: Bringer of the New Age – PS

> Infinite Health P1 & P2 80178A9A 2400

Have All Characters 801C0FF4 FFFF

Have All Movies 801C0FD0 FFFF

Get All Pictures 801C0FFC FFFF 801C0FFE FFFF 801C1000 FFFF 801C1002 FFFF 801C1004 FFFF

Have All Custom 801C0FEC FFFF 801C0FEE FFFF

Need For Speed: High Stakes — PS

Infinite Cash in Account 80115DA4 C9FF 80115DA6 3B9A

Infinite Pursuit Time 8005E1EE 2400

Semi-Drunk Mode 8013E6AC 002F

Drunk Mode 8013E6AC 001F

Heavy Car 801144DC 0002

Unlock Durham Road 80115D2c 0001

Unlock Celtic Ruins 80115D24 0001

Unlock Raceway 2 80115D30 0001

Unlock Raceway 80115D34 0001

Unlock Raceway 3 80115D38 0001

Unlock SnowyRidge 80115D10 0001

Unlock Dolphin Cove 80115D18 0001

#### Ridge Racer Type 4 — PS

Unlock Extra Trial 800F3B24 0001

Complete Extra Trial

800F3B2C 0101 800F3B2E 0101

Unlock All Team DRT Cars 800F3AE0 FFFF 800F3AE2 FFFF 800F3AE4 FFFF 800F3AE6 FFFF 800F3AE8 FFFF 800F3AEA FFFF 800F3AEC FFFF 800F3AEE FFFF

Unlock All Team MMM Cars
800F3AF0 FFFF
800F3AF2 FFFF
800F3AF4 FFFF
800F3AF6 FFFF
800F3AF8 FFFF
800F3AFA FFFF
800F3AFC FFFF
800F3AFE FFFF

Unlock All Team PRC Cars 800F3B00 FFFF 800F3B02 FFFF 800F3B04 FFFF 800F3B06 FFFF 800F3B08 FFFF 800F3B0A FFFF 800F3B0C FFFF 800F3B0E FFFF

Unlock All Team Solvalou Cars 800F3B10 FFFF 800F3B12 FFFF 800F3B14 FFFF 800F3B16 FFFF 800F3B18 FFFF 800F3B1A FFFF 800F3B1C FFFF

> All Tracks Unlocked 800F3ADC FFFF 300F3B24 0001 800F3B28 0101 800F3B2C 0101

> > Infinite Tries 800AD698 0303

#### Dungeons & Dragons Collection — Saturn Import

Disc 1: Tower of Doom Master Code F6000924 C305 B6000B00 0000

> Infinite Health 160E0990 00A0

Infinite Silver 160E09C6 00FF Infinite Exp. 160E09C0 FFFF

Infinite Items
160E0790 0909
160E0792 0909
160E0794 0909
160E0796 0909
160E079A 0909
160E079C 0909
160E079E 0909
160E07AU 0909
160E07AU 0909
160E07AU 0909

#### Star Ocean 2 — PS

Max Fol 8009B610 C9FF 8009B612 3B9A

Infinite Fol 8009B610 FFFF

Save Anywhere 80074628 0001

Max HP 8009A9D4 270F 8009A9DC 270F

Infinite HP in Battle 8009A9DC 270F

> Max MP 8009A9E0 270F 8009A9E4 270F

Infinite MP in Battle 8009A9E4 270F

> Max STR 8009A9EA 270F

Max CON 8009A9F0 270F

Max DEX 8009A9FC 270F

Max AGL 8009A9F6 270F Max INT 8009AA02 270F

Max GUTS 3009AA08 00FF

Sketching 3009AA1D 000A

Musical Notation 3009AA1E 000A

Music Instruments 3009AA1F 000A

Tool Knowledge 3009AA20 000A

Mineralogy 3009AA21 000A

Herbal Medicine 3009AA22 000A

Craft 3009AA23 000A

Esthetic Sense 3009AA24 000A

Writing 3009AA25 000A

Effort 3009AA26 000A

Perseverance 3009AA27 000A

Patience 3009AA28 000A

Danger Sense 3009AA29 000A

Biology 3009AA2A 000A

Mental Science 3009AA2B 000A

Kitchen Knife 3009AA2C 000A

Recipe 3009AA2D 000A

Good Eye 3009AA2E 000A

Whistling 3009AA2F 000A

Animal Training 3009AA30 000A

Metal Casting 3009AA31 000A

Scientific Ability 3009AA32 000A

Fairyology 3009AA33 000A

Radar 3009AA34 000A Piety 3009AA35 000A

Playfulness 3009AA36 000A

Functionality 3009AA37 000A

Courage 3009AA38 000A

Poker Face 3009AA39 000A

Copying 3009AA3A 000A

Mech Knowledge 3009AA3B 000A

Mech Operation 3009AA3C 000A

Below the Belt 3009AA3D 000A

Strong Blow 3009AA3E 000A

Flip 3009AA3F 000A

Counterattack 3009AA40 000A

Feint 3009AA41 000A

Mental Training 3009AA42 000A

Motormouth 3009AA43 000A

Body Control 3009AA44 000A

Spirit Force 3009AA45 000A

Parry 3009AA46 000A

Cancel 3009AA47 000A

Gale 3009AA48 000A

Provocation 3009AA49 000A

Float 3009AA4A 000A

#### Dungeons and Dragons Collection (SS Import)

#### Disc 1: Tower of Doom

Master Code F6000924 C305 B6000B00 0000

Infinite Health 160E0990 00A0

Infinite Silver 160E09C6 00FF

Infinite Exp. 160E09C0 FFFF

Infinite Items
160E0790 0909
160E0792 0909
160E0794 0909
160E0796 0909
160E079A 0909
160E079C 0909
160E079C 0909
160E07AU 0909
160E07AU 0909
160E07AU 0909

#### Disc 2: Shadow Over Mystara

Master Code F6000924 FFFF B6002800 0000

Infinite Health 160E0832 0060

Infinite Silver 160E08E4 00FF

Infinite Items In Ring 160E0918 0902

> Infinite Health 160E0A32 0060

Infinite Silver 1601F674 0104

Infinite Keys 160E0398 0009

#### Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition (PS Import)

Infinite Time 800AC994 114E

Player 1 Infinite Health 800AD7EE 0170

Player 2 Infinite Health 800AF00E 0170 Player 1 Infinite Power 800AD820 0030

Player 2 Infinite Power 800AF040 0030

Use Secret Character 300ACA7E 0003

#### Grandia (PS Import)

Get Lots Of Money After One Battle 8009C68C FFFF

Fast Level Up After One Battle 8009C688 FFFF

Infinite Points For Getting Magic 801A97E0 0001

> Infinite Money 80010164 967F 80010166 0098

#### Rival Schools 2 (PSX Import)

Enable Code D00A6CFA 1040 800A6CFA 1000

Player 1 Infinite Hp 801EFA02 00C8

Player 2 Infinite Hp 801EFE02 00C8

Player 1 Infinite Sp 801EFC18 0900

Player 2 Infinite Sp 801F0018 0900

Player 1 No Energy 801EFE02 0000

Player 2 No Power 301F0019 0000

Max Point 801F5B04 869F 801F5B06 0001

# Metal Gear Solid Integral (PS Import)

(All codes for VR Disc only)

Enable Code for VR Disc D00C209A 1040 800C209A 1000

Clear Sneaking Mode 800E1050 FFFF 800E1068 FFFF 800E1080 FFFF 800E1098 FFFF

Clear Weapon Mode 800E1052 FFFF 800E1054 FFFF 800E1056 FFFF 800E1058 FFFF 800E105A FFFF 800E106A FFFF 800E106C FFFF 800E106E FFFF 800E1070 FFFF 800E1072 FFFF

Clear Advavced Mode 800E1082 FFFF 800E1084 FFFF 800E1086 FFFF 800E1088 FFFF 800E109A FFFF 800E109C FFFF 800E109E FFFF 800E10A0 FFFF 800E10A2 FFFF

Clear Special Mode 800E10BC FFFF 800E10D4 FFFF 300E10ED 00FF 300E10EE 00FF 800E1122 FFFF 300E1124 00FF 300E114F 00FF 300E1150 0001 800E11CE FFFF 300E1181 00FF

> Infinite Life 800B2A0E 0600 800B2A10 0600

Always Use Stealth 800B2A16 000A

Infinite Socom Ammo 800B2A1A 0064 800B2A1C 0064 800B2A1E 0064



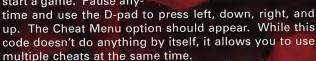
#### Star Wars: Episode One Racer (N64)

Is the need for speed driving you into headfirst collisions? Are you continually hugging that safe wall for fear of being sideswiped by passing traffic? Are you strong in the Force, but not quite a Jedi? Well then the following codes might give you the edge if you want to be at the top of the pack:

#### Cheat menu:

Select tournament mode, and select an empty save slot. Now, before you enter any initials hold Z, and enter

"RRDEBUG" using Shift to select each letter. You should see the letters appear in the bottom left corner. Once this is done, highlight "End" and press Z, A, and L shift simultaneously. The words "OK" should appear at the bottom left corner. Now, enter your initials and start a game. Pause any-



#### Invincibility:

Select tournament mode, and select an empty save slot. Now, before you enter any initials hold Z, and

enter "RRJABBA" using L Shift to select each letter. You should see the letters appear in the bottom left corner. Once this is done, highlight "End" and press Z, A, and L shift simultaneously. The words "OK" should appear at the bottom left corner. Now, enter your initials and start a game. Pause any-

time and use the D-pad to press left, down, right, and up. You will now be near invincible.

#### **Have 6 Pitdroids**

Select tournament mode, and select an empty save slot. Now, before you enter any initials hold Z, and enter "RRPIT-DROID." using L Shift to select each letter. You should see the letters appear in the bottom left corner. Once this is done, highlight "End" and press Z, A, and L shift simultaneously. The words "OK" should appear at the bottom left corner. Now, enter your initials and start a game. At Watto's shop, press up, down, left, right, right, up.

#### Mirror mode:

Select tournament mode, and select an empty save slot. Now, before you enter any initials hold Z, and enter "RRTHEBEAST" using L Shift to select each letter. You should see the letters appear in the bottom left corner. Once this is done, highlight "End" and press Z, A, and L shift simultaneously. The words "OK" should appear at the bottom left corner. Now, enter your initials and start a

game. Pause anytime and use the D-pad to press left, down, right, and up. You'll be racing the selected track backwards.

#### **Dual control option:**

Make sure you have two N64 pads plugged into ports #1 and #3. Now, select tournament mode, and select an empty save slot. Now before you enter any initials hold Z, and enter

"RRDUAL" using L Shift to select each letter. You should see the letters appear in the bottom left corner. Once this is done, highlight "End" and press Z, A, and L shift simultane ously. The words "OK" should appear at the bottom left corner. Now, enter your initials and start a game



You can now use both N64 controllers to pilot your pod race

#### **Bonus pilot:**

Select tournament mode, then highlight an unused postion on the name entry screen. Hold Z and enter RRJINNR as a name by pressing L to select each letter. Select "End, then press L followed by A.

#### Taunt opponent:

Select tournament mode. Hold Z and press A to begin race at the menu. An intermission that features your cha acter and opponent taunting each other will appear. Pres R(2) during the race for more taunts.

#### Quick start:

Press A just as the number one disappears for a quick star

#### Some tips from Master Dango, Jedi Gamer

As you may know, pod racing is both very fast and very dangerous. While this game isn't extremely difficult, the ater tracks (especially the invitational races) become nsanely strenuous on the reflexes. Mastering some of the following subtle techniques in this game will ensure you the championship title of pod racing.

#### Boosting

On long straight-aways, boosting is a very powerful echnique. In order to perform a turbo boost, when you're going at top speed, hold up on the Analog Stick while accelerating. You're speed will begin to go up a



it and you should see green indicator flash. low, release A and ress it again, and ou'll get a super oost of speed that ou can maintain. If your engines an catch on fire from rolonged boosting,



's pretty easy to extinguish the flames from such oosting. Use the boost whenever you can!

#### eering and Tilting

sing the C-Left and C-Right buttons will make your odracer tilt 90 degrees. This maneuver is extremely use-

ful, not only to get through small cracks, but it help in those really tight turns. Also, if you know you're going to hit a wall, tilt the podracer so that it hits the bottom of your vehicle. This lessens the damage dramatically.



#### **Parts Listing**

Here is the complete listing of parts and their price in the game. Note, there is a sixth part for every category that you can only get in the junkyard.

#### ACCELERATION

Dual 20PCX Injector — 800 44 PCX Injector — 2200 Dual 32PCX Injector — 5600 Quad 32PCX Injector — 7000 Quad 44PCX Injector — 10400

#### AIR BRAKES

Mark II Air Brake — 700 Mark III Air Brake — 1400 Mark IV Air Brake — 3600 Mark V Air Brake — 7000 Tri-jet Air Brake — 10400

#### COOLING

Coolant Radiator — 50 Stack-3 Radiator — 100 Stack-6 Radiator — 300 Rod Coolant Pump — 900 Dual Coolant Pump — 2700

#### REPAIR

Single Power Cell — 150
Dual Power Cell — 300
Quad Power Cell — 800
Cluster Power Plug — 1400
Rotary Power Plug — 4000

#### TOP SPEED

Plug2 Thrust Coil — 1000 Plug3 Thrust Coil — 2400 Plug5 Thrust Coil — 6000 Plug8 Thrust Coil — 14000 Block5 Thrust Coil — 17500

#### **TRACTION**

R-20 Repulsorgrip — 250 R-60 Repulsorgrip — 400 R-80 Repulsorgrip — 600 R-100 Repulsorgrip — 1200 R-300 Repulsorgrip — 2600

#### **TURNING**

Control Linkage — 200 Control Shift Plate — 400 Control Vectro Jet — 700 Control Coupling — 1600 Control Nozzle — 3800



Two years ago, Square released Final Fantasy VII on September 9th, so they could do the cool 9-9-97 promotion. Well, instead of bringing out FFVIII on 9-9-99, the date has been pushed up a couple days to 9-7-99. Could it be that Square EA doesn't want kids to walk into a game store September 9th and have to choose between FFVIII and Sega's shiny new Dreamcast? If all goes well for Square, gamers will be \$50 short when buying a DC September 9th.

Launch Wars Pt. 1: The FF Menace

#### Final Fantasy... IX?

While Final Fantasy VIII hasn't been released in the U.S. yet, there's already talk of Final Fantasy IX being in development. What's adding more fuel to the rumor mill fire is the leaking of top secret design docs for an as-yet-unnamed Square title onto the Internet. Coming from an anonymous source, these characters sketches and artwork found their way onto fan sites on the World Wide Web. When reached for comment, Square said the following: "We are focusing on Final Fantasy VIII and have no information on sequels to this title." Whether the leaked design docs were legit, we got a big "No comment." Though this is much what we expected, if the artwork was fake, they would have denounced it as fake, right?

#### Launch Wars Pt. 2: An Affordable Hope

In last month's Other Stuff, we reported that the Dreamcast would retail in the U.S. for \$199 on September 9th with a 56k modem packed in. Well, to combat this great deal. Nintendo and Sony will surely drop the price of their consoles to less than \$100. KayBee Toys has already dropped the price to an affordable \$99 for both systems, and it's expected Sony and Nintendo will make official announcements shortly. Not wishing the competition to have the upper hand in the price wars, Sega of Japan has officially reduced the price of the Japanese Dreamcast to \$169 (converted from yen to dollars), though this package is without a modem. If Sega can drop the price in Japan, could we see yet another price slash by Christmas?

#### Launch Wars Pt. 3: Sony Strikes Back

We find it hard to believe, but sources in Japan are hinting that Sony is so far ahead of the game that they're considering launching the PlayStation 2 on 9-9-99 in Japan to steal the thunder from the launch of Sega's Dreamcast in the U.S. Considering that Sony was reportedly having problems manufacturing the chip for their next-gen console in mass quantity, this 'sudden launch' seems extremely unlikely, but stranger things have happened...

#### Launch Wars Pt. 4: Return of the Big "N"

While everybody focuses in on Dreamcast and PS2 comparisons, Nintendo lurks in the background, quietly commanding the attention of a whole section of the gaming community waiting to hear any news concerning the Dolphin (Nintendo's next generation console after the N64). Well, Nintendo fans, word has it that the Dolphin controller will hook up with your

games like *Mario Paint, Zelda Gaiden,* and a rumored *SimCity* game, then you're going to have to brave the import waters, my Nintendo-loving friends.

#### Zelda: A Link From the Past

I'm sure you're all waiting with bated breath concerning any news of a new Zelda title in development, right? Well, word among the grapevine says that a new Zelda game is in development with the tentative title Zelda Gaiden. While this will be a 64DD game in Japan, since the peripheral isn't coming to the U.S., we will probably see a cartridge version of ZG. Wouldn't that be a fitting way for Nintendo to usher out the N64 and tide gamers over till the Dolphin makes its big splash? We're hearing that the game will star Young Link, not Adult Link.

#### Onimusha — First Casualty of the Console Wars?

As the Console Wars heat up, it appears we might be feeling the effects already. *Onimusha*, a much-anticipated Capcom

title described as Resident Evil meets Tenchu, is rumored to be no longer in development for PS. From what we hear, Capcom is turning this block-buster game into a PS2 title. Guess we'll have to wait a little longer, but it should all be worth it.





into a steering wheel. Just hold your pad by the sides, and rotate it like a steering wheel! The sensors detect your movement, and you'll be able to play driving games without getting your thumb sore. Cool!

Check out these

cool accessories

Both the TILT Pak

and the TILT Force

2 use state-of-the-

art motion sensing

technology to turn

your controller

from Pelican.

Game Boy, much like Sega's VMS plugs into the Dreamcast controller. Imagine picking sports plays and such on your Game Boy. At least that plug-in peripheral will have a multi-million user installed base before the system launches...

#### DD Will Not Go Quietly Into The Night...

Speaking of Nintendo peripherals... In last month's Other Stuff, we mentioned that the Nintendo 64 DD (a readable/writeable peripheral) was dead and would **not** come out. Well... we were half right. Despite developer skepticism, constant delays, and consumer apathy, the ill-fated peripheral will be coming out in Japan. On the other hand, Nintendo of America will not be releasing it. So if you're dying to play DD

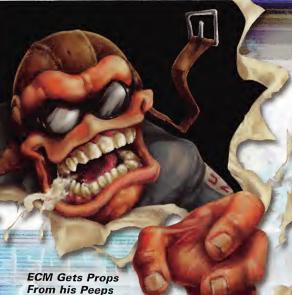
#### Launch Wars Pt. 5: Sega Sweetens the Deal?

SNK's new game, King of Fighters '99 (a 2D and 3D fighter) is rumored to be a U.S. Dreamcast launch title. Also, the Dreamcast is planning to debut with a free sample disc, giving you a brief glimpse of future titles. Well, sources suggest a full Dreamcast game will be available with that

sample disc. One name they're throwing around is Sega Rally 2. Let's hope this isn't idle speculation.

#### **Loose Tidbits**

Resident Evil 2 is coming to Dreamcast. Syphon Filter 2 is in development for PlayStation. Diddy Kong Racing for the Game Boy has been canned. And for the last time, stop yer bitching... no Metroid game is in development for N64. It's possible EA will bring us Koudelka, an RPG developed by Sacnoth (including former members of Square). Sources are saying that the NGPC will be able to support up to 64 players with wireless link compatibility, though no games are available yet that would take advantage of something ridiculous like that.



Write to me, I'm running for president!!!

The Postmeister

6301 DeSoto Avenue Suite E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

years long past... but I digress.

When I began to ponder this letter, it struck me that perhaps the Postal Skunk Principles are carrying over to the video game industry, as well. How often have we seen companies like Nintendo and Sony (and yes, occasionally even Segal pointing to the high sales of very bad games, claiming that they're actually quite good because they sold so well? Is it possible that after so many titles have come down the pike (both good and bad), publishers are having a hard time figuring out which ones are actually good, and which ones aren't? If a bona fide stinker still sells massive numbers while an excellent title sells poorly, is it then possible that gamers at large have grown so accustomed to the stench that they are unable to enjoy the sweet scents of gaming excellence when they occasionally waft through the air? Say it ain't so!

Sure, plenty of the games coming to the Dreamcast look and play great... but where there is light, there must be shadows, and you can be certain that Sega's little powerhouse will have its share of losers — it's the nature of the business. However, we can hope that Sega will improve on the ratio of good to bad on their console, and we can also hope that the publishers will discriminate a little bit more on what they crank out for the DC. The staff of GameFan have highly-tuned gaming 'nostrils,' so when you're not sure about your next gaming purchase, just pick up our magazine or visit the Website, and get a strong, deep whiff of what we're cooking!

Regards,

will do well.

Wes Pringle
Via the Internet

Dear Editors,

I just had to write to tell you

how much I enjoyed your May edi-

approach is rare in this industry - but

certainly appreciated. I know many who

share your perspective. Recently, on the

internet, a thread was circulating called

"The Thrill Is Gone." In the thread, hard

core gamers were describing how the

never-ending stream of crappy sequels

was destroying their enjoyment of video

games. Some were even predicting a

The overall consensus to those who felt

so disillusioned? Get a Dreamcast. I

said it. Others said it. The Dreamcast

has restored faith in gaming for many

many hard core players. Finally, it

seems that true 16-bit gameplay has

I will be rooting for Sega in the months

ahead. And given what I've seen of their

system and their games — I am sure they

crash of 1983 proportions.

made its way into 3D.

Such an honest and direct

On the day your letter came in, I was in the middle of organizing a full-scale assault on the local grocer, who has refused to discontinue the sale of canned meat products despite my many threats and a full-scale Postal picket-line: a force of but one lone protestor which brought their entire business to nigh-standstill. One should never underestimate the power of Post-Fu's most dangerous and potentially deadly discipline: going without bathing for a week! It is the wisdom of the ancients that I pass on to only my most adept and socially-responsible pupils, and I will share it with you now... a skunk cannot smell its own stink. Especially when that particular skunk's nasal passages no longer work because of a freak Blowmeister Games accident in

#### Posty Ain't Nobody's Pen-Pal...

Hello my brutha! How's the gaming? I have some questions for your all-mighty-ness.

- 1.) Will there ever be a *Gundam* game to come out in the US? Because when I sit down and play *Battle Masters* or *Z-Gundam*, I'm PO'ed that a publisher hasn't picked them up yet, oh well, only time, and luck, will tell.
- 2.) Did you ever find Chim-Chim (the monkey buddy from *Speed Racer*), well, a little, how should I say... Fruity?

- 3.) What's your musical preference? You have probably answered this question plus one times, but I probably missed that issue.
- 4.) My girlfriend wants to know if you can get to level 27 in GameBoy Tetris Type A... HEY! DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT! She wanted to know.
- 5.) If my friends and myself were to make an independent comic book, would you buy a copy? It's gonna be the dilly yo! Anyway, it'll be fantasy based; in about a year, look for a comic called Serinity, if you do this I will give you a hug.

And last but most certainly not least...

- 6.) How many licks does it REALLY take to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop!? I think you fellas should have a survey, have all the readers try it out, then take an average!
- P.S. Well, this was my FIRST letter I EVER wrote into a magazine... I hope I didn't make an ass of myself. I'll be your best friend if you print this!

Jordan Wiseman Via the Internet

Though I've always got an entourage of gamers in tow who want nothing more than to glean even the most superficial understanding of the gaming world from me, it is the rarest of men who is bold enough to make a bid for my friendship. Though women the world over will fight to the death in a bid for my affections, it is not something I offer lightly... and the fact that you have offered your friendship to me, if only I were to run your letter is at once both offensive and deliciously arrogant. Therefore, I will refrain from my usual reaction of issuing a swift S.T.B. (Steel Toed Boot) and sending you on your way humbled and bleeding, and instead answer your questions as only I can ... prepare yourself.

- 1.) Yes, Bandai's enormously popular mecha series is on its way to the Dreamcast in a game called Gundam 0079 Side Story, and Sega currently has plans to publish the game themselves here in America. It was shown in Sega's booth at E3, and definitely has that DC graphical flair.
- 2.) While I find monkeys in general a little fruity, and Speed Racer in particular

excessively fruity, any character named Chim-Chim takes the Chiquita title hands-down.

3.) The Postmeister likes just about any music he comes in contact with, except for the following: Country, Rap, Hip-Hop and R&B, Classic Rock, Polka, Bluegrass, Chamber Choir, Yodeling, Traveling Minstrels, Hog-Callers, and the Merry-Go-Round organ at any given Amusement Park. My favorite sounds are the tortured screams of the GameFan staff when ECM puts on some of those golden '80s standards by Wham!, The Bangles, Culture Club, or if I'm really lucky... Hall & Oates!

4.) I'm a little rusty, but if I'm not mistaken your woman just hit on me in Tetriscode... you'd better keep an eye on her, she's a wild one!

5.) I would have to work it into my \$5 budget, and it just doesn't look like that's gonna happen... of course, if you send it as a campaign contribution it's taxdeductible... anything for the cause, my friends!

6.) You're supposed to lick those things?

#### Feeling Like He Just Got Slugged...

Dear GameFan Magazine:

Guys, I'm having one extremely hard time finding an imported copy of *Metal Slug* for the Sega Saturn!!

I've run up my phone bill three times over by calling video game/mailorder companies like: Electronics Boutique, Game Express, P&L, Game Dude, Buy Rite, NCS and Tommo!!! Why is it that no one seems to have a copy!?!?

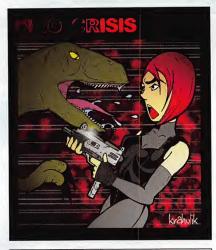
Aww, help me, please!!! If you guys happen to have a copy at GameFan that I can buy off of you, just let me know how much, who & where to send the postal money order to! Or, tell me where I can order it from!

Y'know, it's a very hard pill for a "Sega faithful" to swallow when you see your system go under, & watch my "Sega" sit on the sidelines of the video game industry for more than a year! But, ironically, it's even harder trying to find a copy of Metal Slug!

Once again, if you can, please help me find a copy of this fabulous game!

Larue "Soy Sauce" Binder Los Angeles, C.A.

Even though I try to do everything in my power to aid Posty-fans the world over in their various gaming plights, I'm afraid this one has even the most powerful man in gaming stumped like Alex Trebek without his cue cards. The problem is, everyone I know who has a copy of this game refuses to let go of it. I've bribed, begged, pleaded, whined, and even threatened to invoke the most feared and revered law in all of Postydom, the P.T.F.F. (Punch That Freak in the Face) law... all to no effect. It is a powerful thing that renders the P.T.F.F. law completely ineffective, my friends—and Metal Slug is just such a force.



Our art director Reubus has still been getting art from Posty-Fans, and these two come courtesy of an artist named Krahulik. Not sure where he's from or what kinda name that is, but he's good!



To the most resourceful gamers in the world, online auction sites such as Ebay are usually the first stop. The more adventurous often wander into the untamed wilds of Usenet to tempt their fates doing business with the hundreds of turbo-sausages populating that area of the Net. But because this is the Saturn we're talking about, you may be forced to continue bugging every mail order and import gaming shop you know of from now until the end of time in order to get a copy of this rare and precious gem.

Patience and persistence are your allies, my friend... impatience is your enemy. Searching for rare imports is like trying to find that perfect, undamaged box of

frozen Pizza Rolls; it's an arduous process that can stretch on for weeks, months — perhaps even years. But the payoff... ahh, the payoff is one of the sweetest a human being can experience, isn't it? So search on, my friend... search on!

#### Planning a Future With Sega's DC?

To The Almighty Posty,

We are but mere pebbles to your almighty mountain about games. I was just wondering if you could tell me what the first five Dreamcast games I should get are, and how long do you think the Dreamcast is going to last? I think the Dreamcast is the perfect type of system for everybody because it's not enormous in strength but the games & gameplay are there. It has the power to make 2D & arcade games too... it's perfect. Now if only there was a Dreamcast *Pong*.

P.S. Love the mag & hope you become president!

Kevin D. Zillah, WA

Yes, but even the drop of a pebble causes ripples throughout my tranquil lake, and reminds the gaming giant who lives within that once again, his unique services are required. I will answer the call as I always do, because that's why I'm here... and that's why you came.

When the Dreamcast launches in America, it will have an array of delightful titles to tantalize and excite... but for those of us on a budget, not every game can be had! It is a problem that will be encountered by thousands of gamers who reach for their tragically trim pocketbooks on 9-9-99, and I will do my best to offer guidance. The first problem in answering this question is simple... I don't know what kind of games you like! GameFan's staff can point out all the best games for each system (and we do, we do!) but it's really up to you, the gamer, to make the decision based on your unique tastes.

Hollywood Video should be doing a rental program months before the Dreamcast is sold in America, but my guess is that thing's gonna be tougher to find for rent than a copy of Titanic on Valentine's Day. My suggestion? Hit the phone book and see if there are any import shops near you... check them out and see if they'll let you play some of the games that are already available. And then of course, there's the obvious: Read GameFan religiously!

Though I cannot misguide you by forcing you to choose the five Dreamcast

games I personally like best, I must applaud you on making Posty your candidate for the presidency of the United States. In a Postal Presidency, games like Dreamcast Pong would not be such a laughable fantasy obviously conjured up in a miguided gamer's Twinkie & Jolt-induced stupor, but would instead be inching their way toward reality on some plane of existence (though probably not ours). Remember fans, it's Postmeister in 2001: Vote early, and vote often!

sive brawn sufficient to contain the fearsome might of my four-wheeled earth-crusher, but he quickly found his ability woefully lacking. Losing control of the beast, he single-handedly leveled a local mini-mall with the efficiency of a six-point earthquake.

So you see Amy, much as I would like to accommodate you, I'm afraid the safety of the public at large has to take priority.

#### Let's Go Space Truckin' ... C'mon!

Where can I get a truck like yours? If I can't get one of my own, could you at least let me drive it just once? Please?

Amy Kasumito Via the Internet

I see you're an aficionado of finely crafted automobiles, Amy... allow me to complement your taste and sophistication. Clearly you know your wheels. However, I must warn you that this truck has been custom built from the ground-up with yours truly in mind. No mere mortal can pilot this monster; it requires cat-like reflexes, an iron will, and incredible good looks to keep this beast under control... and for that reason, I cannot in good conscience allow anyone astride this iron steed other than myself. Trust me, it is for your own safety and well-being... El Niño once thought his mas-

#### The Last Rites For Sega Saturn

First off, I've gotta say this. You rock, Posty! Every time I pick up a GameFan issue, yours is the first section I read. Seriously. Anyhow, I'm writing cause I'm a big Sega Saturn Fan, due to the imports. I was wondering that since SOA isn't going to make any more SS games, will SOJ follow?

Doku Ku99 Via the Internet

Because you led off by telling me what a fan you are of our magazine and how religiously you read my section, I thought for sure that your letter would fill me with joy, secure in the knowledge that yet another fine gamer has been educated by our pages... but alas, it was not meant to be. Where have you been for the last four or five

months, my excessively-sheltered import fiend? The Saturn was declared D.O.A. by Sega of America just around the same time their Japanese counterpart gave up the ghost... There is no new Saturn development going on at SoA or SoJ... or just about anywhere else, to be honest. Whatever was left over when Sega read the Saturn its burial rites is slowly trickling out, but that's all she wrote on that machine.

So, if you want to continue to enjoy your Saturn, it looks like you'll have to investigate the backlog of imports that you might have missed, which should be on clearance at most import houses right about now. See, there's this little machine Sega's got going right now called the Dreamcast, and supposedly it's really hot stuff... perhaps you should check into it?



Busty women will always have a home here in Postmeister! Even though I don't know who this fine specimen is, I do know what I like! This lovely lass was submitted by Andrew Bremer of LaCrosse, WI

#### Can't Get Enough GameBoy?

Hey Posty,

I wasn't sure who to address my concern to, but for as long as I've been reading your mag you seem



No woman can resist the raw, animal magnetism of the Postmeister! This image of Darkstalkers' Hsien-Ko comes to us from Lowena Ko of Coquitlam, B.C. Good work!

to be the nicest and most knowledgeable. I don't know how many readers agree with me, but I was wondering why the color GameBoy isn't covered more in-depth? I understand it may not be as cutting edge as the Dreamcast or the PSY (I plan to get a Dreamcast... die hard Sega fan) but I love the little machine. I am most curious about the R-Type title, Super Mario Bros., and also Street Fighter for the GameBoy. Can u update me on these titles and point me to any reviews?

Mike Via the Internet

GameFan has always been about the latest and hottest, and even though the GameBoy has been colorized it's still... well, it's the same old GameBoy that we've been playing for over ten years now. Now we've got the Neo-Geo Pocket Color and Bandai's Wonderswan to contend with too... What's a pocket games fanatic to do?

Go online baby, that's what! By the time you read this, GameFan will have slapped its new Web design online, replete with an entire section dedicated to portable gaming. In this section you'll be able to find previews, reviews and features on the latest goings-on with your favorite consoles-to-go, so next time you're about to boogie across the electric waves of the Net, be sure to make a stop at GameFan Online for the latest on all your favorite cutting-edge consoles, as well as the latest in portable video games!

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INSIDE PLANET SHES

#### Waffle Chips... Or Silicon Wafers?

Dear Posty,

Before I get to my question I must first go through the formalities and brownnose you guys. Posty, you and GameFan Magazine are hands down the greatest. From AnimeFan to Postmeister, you guys are simply 'Da Bomb'!!!

Now that I'm done with the formalities I have some questions concerning the Dreamcast.

- 1.) Will DC have the 56k modem included for the stated \$199? Dreamcast's launch is only months away and Sega is still not releasing any solid information on the Dreamcast in America!
- 2.) Besides Sega Rally 2, what other games are supposed to be available on DC's launch date? Also, what about the rumor that Sega Rally 2 will be included with the Dreamcast?
- INSIDE SEGS SECTOR: 3.) Can we expect Konami to do any insulation of the control of the control
  - 4.) What is Sega up to? Their web site does not even have any info on the Dreamcast!

Thanks and if you answer all my questions satisfactorily I might even send you some of those waffle chips that you love so much.

Robert J Hisle Via the Internet

Ahhh, he tempts me with those tasty fried morsels, knowing how powerless I am in their presence. Just as Superman is to Kryptonite, is Posty to his Waffle Chips. Chewy, crispy, delightful wafers... they're a little taste of Heaven on earth, I tell you! Oh yes, the chips shall be mine, in return for the gifts of gaming knowledge as only I can deliver them! Get ready to fork over the goods, and have the ketchup ready, pal!

- 1.) Yes, Sega finally confirmed that the American Dreamcast will indeed contain a modem for the list price of the system. The company is being tight-lipped about the system's launch in order to build the anticipation for its release, but it's not always good to be TOO quiet...
- 2.) The lineup seems to change every day, so I'm not going to pin it down for you... keep track of all the "comings and goings" by checking GameFan Online. However, I can tell you that the system isn't going to arrive packed with games just a sampler disc containing playable demos and movies.
- 3.) I think you can expect Konami to do

any games they think will make money on the Dreamcast. Do I think that means a Metal Gear title? You'd better believe it, son!

4.) Sega's staying pretty busy these days... after all, their website isn't exactly your only option for getting news and info about the Dreamcast out there on the Net, now is it?

#### Sega Refuses To Arm Gamers...

Only the master of all he surveys can possibly answer this question, so I beseech ye oh Postal one — nay, I prostrate myself before you! Please, I ask only for a morsel of your vast and ponderous wisdom. Will you please explain to me why Sega isn't going to release the DC light gun in America? Ok, so I can understand Sega being sympathetic about violence happening in American society today, but surely they don't think they're helping matters by releasing shoot-em-ups without the shooterupper? What message is Sega trying to send here? Or are they just trying to save themselves a public relations embarrassment with news crews knocking down their doors asking why they're so irresponsible as to produce a toy gun for use with their violent video games? Help me understand, Posty... your cup of knowledge is overflowing, so please let a few drops land on me!

Jimmy Brown Via the Internet

Jimmy has done as thousands upon thousands of other Posty-fans have, and humbled himself before me as he knows he must, for it is the only circumstance under which the knowledge can flow. Unfortunately, I'm afraid you're not going to like the answers you receive on this day, my loyal Postal warrior... it seems Sega is afraid of their guns being used unsuccessfully in thousands of drive-by pointings and failed hold-ups around the United States after the release of House of the Dead 2. There must have also been a great deal of worry from the law enforcement around the nation as well, because the gun clearly resembles the firearms used by many violent offenders... from other planets, of course, but offenders nevertheless.

Get real... The reason is simple: Sega is incredibly afraid of bad press going into the launch of their new console. They don't want anything detracting from possible sales of the system, and the last things they need to deal with are boycotts and picketing from parents groups who feel the release of a light-gun was badly-timed or irresponsible. On the one hand Sega will stand up and tell you that their games don't cause kids to go

off the deep end and kill each other, and then on the other they'll bow to public opinion and not release the light gun. Welcome to corporate America.

Not to worry... where Sega passed, there will be several third-party manufacturers providing guns that look and handle far more realistically than the futuristic-looking, completely benign model that Sega was offering. Consider it a lesson learned in the tangled web of American marketing, my friends.

I believe the time has come for yours truly to formulate a contest, in order to stimulate the creative juices of all of the artistically-inclined Posty-Fans in our audience! As you all know, next month is the due date for Sega's little speed demon, the Dreamcast. To commemorate the launch of the system I thought we'd put something really cool up for grabs... so here it is.



I was going to use it as a replacement for my tattered, worn-out, less-than-fresh-smelling mailbag, but because I'm such a giving, caring human being I will put it up for grabs. This awesome looking, sturdy Dreamcast backpack is an ultra-rare item that will make you the envy of all your friends. Just send your best videogame-related art, either pencils or colored (preferably colored), and make sure it reaches us by the magic date of 9-9-99! Remember though, your art cannot be returned, so do what you gotta do.

Only one winner will be chosen, and their art will be published in these pages! Send a letter, send an e-mail, but get it here on or before Sept. 9th, otherwise you're out of luck! Include me in the picture, and your odds of winning improve dramatically!

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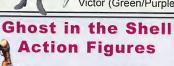
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